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ABSTRACT

School-community collaborations are partnerships that can take different forms and serve many purposes. An overview of some partnership models is provided in this text. It shows how schools can play a central role in the revitalization of a community by serving as community centers and by fostering school-based enterprises. Ways in which students can be connected to their environment through a program called Discovery Team, an educational initiative that allows students to explore the forests and valleys of their community, are discussed. Programs can take shape in the remote areas of Alaska, such as the one described for the village of Quinhagak where the customs and heritage of the Yup'ik community are being preserved, to urban Seattle, where a grassroots effort, combined with a school-community program called Powerful Schools, has energized the area. Other programs, such as the one in the Siskiyou Mountains of Oregon where the community and the schools work in harmony to benefit all the citizens of the area, to initiatives in which urban neighborhoods that use personable approaches to solve big-city problems and enhance social services, are likewise detailed. Programs ranging from financial aid for higher education to strengthening bonds between the school and the community are likewise featured. (RJM)

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IMAGINING NEW MODELS

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Homing Instinct

CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS REMOVE WALLS BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

When writer Paul Gruchow was a boy, he took two years of high school biology. "But I never learned that the beautiful meadow at the bottom of my family's pasture was a remnant virgin prairie," he recounts in *Grass Roots: The Universe of Home*. "We did not spend, as far as I can remember, a single hour on the prairie—the landscape in which we were immersed."

Nor did he learn, until long after he'd moved away, that his town's leading banker was also a botanist. "I can only imagine now what it might have meant to me—a studious boy with a love of nature—to know that a great scholar of natural history had made a full and satisfying life in my town. Nothing in my education prepared me to be interested in my own place. If I hoped to amount to anything, I understood, I had better take the first road out of town as fast as I could. And, like so many of my classmates, I did."

Hearing his story, I can't help but wonder where my oldest son's future will take him. This fall I helped Dan pack up his stuff and move into a college dorm, hundreds of miles away from the Cascade peaks that have watched over his first 18 years of life. It was an exciting rite of passage for both of us. But driving back home in an empty van, I found myself wondering about the road ahead. Will he return to Oregon, eventually? We'll see. In the meantime, I know he has a good sense of the place he's left behind. Outdoor School and summer camps and family hikes have grounded him. Wherever his dreams may take him, he'll know the feel of *home* beneath his feet.

Across the Northwest, schools are finding compelling reasons to teach young people not only about the geography of home, but also about the threads that hold our communities together. They're immersing students in the kind of education that only happens if the walls between schools and communities come tumbling down.

This issue of *Northwest Education* takes a look at what researchers are loosely calling school-community collaborations. These new partnerships can take many forms and serve many purposes, from academic enrichment to economic development to better delivery of social services. But they grow from an idea that's as old as civilization itself: Communities are places where people care for one another. And in most communities, schools still sit at center stage.

Many of the remarkable programs featured in this issue take place in communities that are struggling. In distressed rural areas and impoverished inner cities, citizens aren't waiting for experts to ride into town and fix what ails them. Instead, they're using their own talents and initiative to reweave the threads of their communities. In the process, they're creating a lifeline strong enough to pull themselves, their children, and their communities into the next century.

—*Suzie Boss*
nosss@nwrel.org

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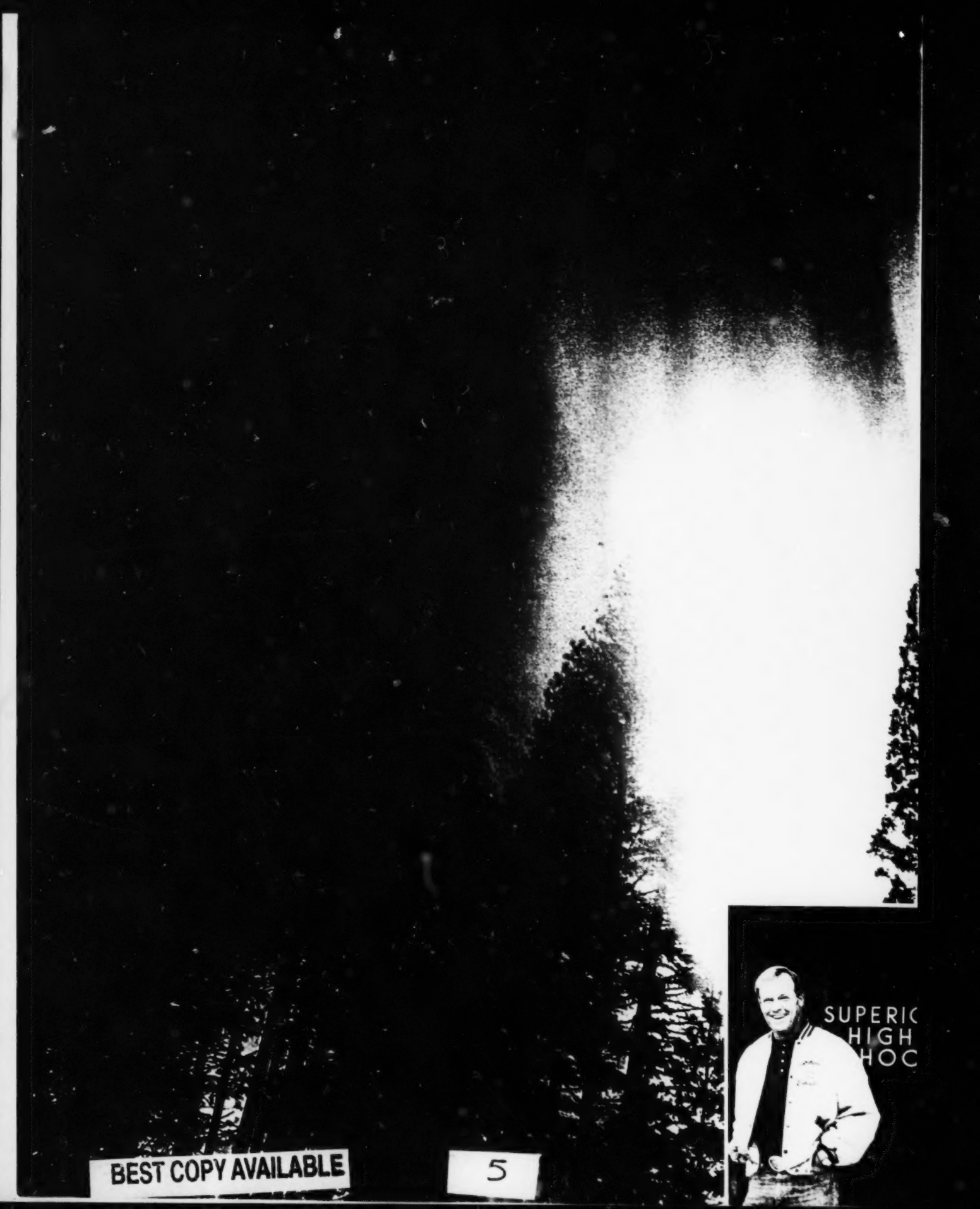

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THE WISDOM OF WORKING TOGETHER

New partnerships enrich schools, families, communities.

By SUZIE BOSS

Look in any direction from Superior, Montana, and you'll see mountains. And trees. Lots of trees. "We're an island, surrounded by forests," says Gordon Hendrick, the 49-year-old mayor of this community of 1,000. There's a river running through the heart of Superior, too, and an interstate highway that winds through the passes to Missoula, about 60 miles away. Since the town was founded a century ago, young people growing up in Superior have looked to those trees for their future. The local mill could be counted on to feed families and generate a tax base to support the town's high school, junior high, and elementary school.

But in 1994, a year after Hendrick was elected to his first term as mayor, the mill closed its doors. It had become more cost-effective to ship raw logs overseas for processing. Overnight, Superior was sucked into a downward spiral that's familiar to many rural areas dependent on a single natural resource. Property values plummeted. Unemployment shot up. The local tax base shrank. Schools had to lay off teachers. Some families packed up and moved on to other places where trees would still provide jobs. Many of those who have stayed, says the mayor, have been left feeling "as if the world has let them down."

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Clearly, Hendrick has his work cut out for him. "How are we going to keep this community energized," he asks himself regularly, "so that we can convince people to stay here? To start new businesses here? So young people won't have to leave town to find jobs?"

Those are hard questions, and they're being asked in other distressed communities all across the country. From Oakland to Chicago, from the dairy farms of Tillamook to the cattle country of eastern Washington, communities are looking for local solutions to problems that may have originated halfway around the globe. "Who would have thought," Hendrick says, "that the labor market in Asia would affect people in a little town like Superior?"

Instead of wringing his hands in despair, Hendrick is throwing his energy into a new partnership that he hopes will pave the way to a better future. Most days, this small-town mayor can be found at Superior High School where he volunteers his time and expertise to coordinate a thriving school-to-work program. His goal is to link students with real-world employers in health care, social service, banking, and a variety of small businesses. He wants to open their eyes to career options outside of forestry, and make sure they have the education to make new dreams possible. Employers, in turn, have a chance to see that this new generation is a capable, committed workforce with flexible job skills—just the kind of employees they'll need to build a sustainable future in Superior, where money no longer grows on trees.

Although folks in Superior sometimes feel isolated from the outside world, they're actually part of a grassroots movement that's gaining momentum across the country. In some of the nation's most economically challenged neighborhoods, both urban and rural, new partnerships and alliances are forming that blur old boundaries between school, family, jobs, and community. Instead of pushing separate agendas—more jobs, better schools, less crime, improved health care—community members are rallying around the wisdom of working together. Educators, civic leaders, local employers, entrepreneurs, parents, and all the people who make a community their home are beginning to see that collaboration can be in everyone's best interest.

Hundreds of miles away from Superior, for instance, residents in one of the nation's poorest urban neighborhoods are living proof of the benefits of partnership. At the start of this decade, Sandtown, a 72-square-block area in Baltimore, was a textbook example of urban decay. Like many other American cities, Baltimore had lost the industrial jobs that once sustained middle-income families. When workers followed jobs to the suburbs, informal networks of friends and kin fell apart. Those left behind found themselves left out of the mainstream, lacking role models, and, often, feeling hopeless about their ability to change their situation.

In the early 1990s, 40 percent of Sandtown's residents lacked high school diplomas and half had annual incomes less than $10,000. The community was riddled with crime, drugs, dilapidated housing projects, vacant lots, and schools that didn't work.

But during the last eight years, Sandtown has been rebuilt and revived from the inside out. Local residents, with the help of experts and a strong push from church leaders, have invented better ways to deliver education, job skills, health care, housing—all the diverse elements that function "to support life instead of degrading it," according to Kurt Schmoke, the visionary Baltimore mayor who helped guide Sandtown to real, lasting renewal. Many of the new efforts aim at getting young people better educated and more engaged in improving the community. Writing about this community revitalization in

The Washington Post, Schmoke said, "Sandtown is the shape of urban policy to come—a community built through a partnership of residents, religious organizations, the Enterprise Foundation, and all the levels of government."

From Superior to Sandtown, and all the places in between, there's new energy in conversations about what sustains and defines communities. Some advocates call this movement "community building," while others refer to "school-linked strategies" or "school-community partnerships." It's not a concept that's owned by any one branch of academics. Instead, researchers from fields ranging from education to economics to sociology are taking notes and, when asked, providing local communities with expertise to get them started on the path to partnership.

So far, experts agree that no one approach works for every community. Multiple strategies are being used, often simultaneously, to meet educational and community development goals. Success is being measured not with charts and graphs, but in stories about community revival, collaborative problem solving, and a deepening sense of place among people who share both geography and values.

According to *Community Building Coming of Age*, a monograph which grew out of a series of seminars on community building and has been published online by the National Community Building Network (NCBN), this renewed sense of partnership offers tangible rewards. Neighbors learn to rely on each other by working together on concrete tasks that take advantage of their collective and individual assets. In the process, they create "human, family, and social capital that provides a new base for a more promising future and reconnection to America's mainstream."

Comprehensive school-linked strategies share a number of elements, no matter how different the communities involved, the issues being addressed, or the particular model being implemented. *Putting the Pieces Together*, published by the U.S. Department of Education and the Regional Educational Laboratory Network, reports that comprehensive strategies:

- Help children, parents, and families by building community resources and relationships
- Help children, parents, and families solve immediate problems and develop the capacity to avoid crises
- Build collaboration among all of the community's major groups and cultures, including parents, churches, and a range of agencies and organizations in addition to schools
- Involve multiple stakeholders in all stages of program planning, design, and implementation
- Communicate in languages that are accessible to all partners
- Flow from a shared vision about improving long-term conditions for children, families, and communities—not simply a goal of providing services or treating a problem

Even in the most distressed neighborhoods, the primary aim of collaboration is not simply giving more money, services, or other material benefits to the poor. Rather, the goal is "to obliterate feelings of dependency and to replace them with attitudes of self-reliance, self-confidence, and responsibility," according to the *Coming of Age* authors.

IMAGINING NEW MODELS

In many of these new partnerships, local schools play a leading role. That's not surprising. For decades, schools have helped to define and unite their neighborhoods. In addition to providing basic education, schools transmit values from one generation to the next. They prepare young people to take their place in the job market and to shoulder their share of civic responsibilities. Improving education is a goal that can bring parents together and mobilize neighbors

around a common cause.

Since the 19th century, schools have served as the cultural center of rural life, according to Bruce Miller, a former senior research associate at NWREL who has written extensively on rural education. Rural schools give community members a central meeting place and regular opportunities to get together. In many rural areas, the school continues to be the strongest—and sometimes the only—community institution. In cities and suburbs, as well, schools still provide a place for neighbors to meet and greet.

Yet, according to a study conducted by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, many schools have become "seriously isolated" from their communities. Urbanization, school consolidations, and a more transient society all share the blame, according to Larry Decker and Mary Richardson Boo. In *Community Schools: Linking Home, School, and Community* they write, "Since most public schools offer nothing to adults without children, it should not be surprising that many adults are unenthusiastic about supporting public education." Adults who had negative experiences with schools when they were young may feel reluctant to become involved with their children's classes. As a solution, Carnegie researchers urge the development of "exceptionally strong ties" between home, school, and community.

Imagining what these new school-community partnerships might look like raises important questions about the role and shape of public education. Should the school become a center for the whole community, delivering education for all ages? If teachers sense that children are not succeeding academically because of issues related to health care, hunger, or housing, should schools be delivering social services along with classroom lessons? Would students be more engaged in learning if they were actively engaged outside the classroom walls, mastering life skills while contributing to the life of the community? If economic issues are paramount to community survival, should schools act as springboards for entrepreneurship, using students' fledgling skills and youthful energy to incubate small businesses?

Research shows that all of these interrelated approaches can revitalize communities and improve academic achievement. Rather than being something that takes place between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., between the ages of five and 18, and within the four walls of the classroom, learning can be reinvented as an activity that engages, defines, unites, and revives the whole community. Miller offers three interrelated models of how schools and communities can intersect:

SCHOOL AS COMMUNITY CENTER. In this first model, the school becomes a resource for lifelong learning and a vehicle for delivering a wide range of services throughout the community.

For example, schools might become involved in retraining dislocated workers. School computer labs, idle after the last bell of the day, can be used in the evenings to teach technical skills and connect local families to the information highway. Community schools can also act as resource centers, bringing a variety of social services under one accessible roof and teaching families how to make use of resources. They may stay open into the evening and throughout the year. San Francisco, for instance, operates three "Beacon Schools," open year-round to strengthen families and foster positive youth development.

COMMUNITY AS CLASSROOM. In the second model, the traditional classroom walls come down. Students use the entire community as their living laboratory. They may contribute to the life of the community through service projects. They may generate information for community development by conduct-

ing surveys or gathering oral histories. Through personal interactions with their adult community members, on their home turf, they gain a deeper understanding of, and psychological connection to, the place they call home.

SCHOOL-BASED ENTERPRISE. In the third model, the school becomes a springboard for local entrepreneurship and business development. Students identify potential service needs and establish a business, such as a day-care center for working families or a shoe-repair shop in a community that doesn't have one, Miller explains. Comprehensive school-based enterprises provide students with supporting curriculum and training.

In one community, for instance, students took a fresh look at the resources available locally. An inventory of vacant lots turned up enough discarded wood to launch a student-run business selling firewood. Operating the business meant learning all the lessons, from budgeting to transportation to accounting, that go along with any small enterprise.

Using these three interrelated models to create "learning communities" can change the culture of a school and the surrounding community. Researchers report that teachers feel less frustration when they can draw on a community of support to remove barriers to learning. Families and community members begin to relate to the school and its staff with more respect and openness.

Although such collaborations are relatively new, acknowledges Dennis Shirley in *Community Organizing for Urban School Reform*, "encouraging results are there, measured in increased student attendance, improved teacher retention, enhanced academic achievement, and new forms of school innovation and community uplift."

Collaborative learning communities may differ in design, but generally, according to *Why Should Schools Be Learning Communities?*, published by the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, they:

- Help students see links between school and the rest of their lives
- Increase parent and community dedication to schools
- Improve coordination among schools and other social service agencies
- Provide stimulating educational opportunities across the life span

HOW RELATIONSHIPS DEFINE A PLACE

How do successful community-school partnerships get started? Often, the seeds are sown in a conversation between neighbors. Why do we live where we live? What do we mean by community? What could we do to make things better for ourselves and our children? Whether that conversation takes place in informal settings or organized community forums, it means that neighbors have acknowledged their shared interest in the place they call home. They have a relationship. A true school community, points out Primus Mootry in an essay, "Schools as the Hub of the Network," is a place where people "have an ongoing conversation ... more like a family than a bureaucratic system."

Increasingly, researchers are paying attention to the importance of relationships that naturally exist within all communities, including those that are struggling. Diane Dorfman, in the *Building Partnerships Workbook* published by NWREL, defines a community not solely as a geographic place, but also by "the relationships in which people interact on an everyday basis." When people share values and interests at local sporting events, over coffee, or even in brief encounters while shopping for groceries, those casual, everyday interactions "allow a community to develop strong bonds and a high level of trust among individuals," asserts Dorfman.

In *Community Organizing for Urban School Reform*, Shirley explains why "social capital" is becoming such a key concept in community development. Unlike physical capital, which describes the value of buildings and infrastructure, or financial capital, which describes the value of money, *social capital* proposes that certain kinds of relationships possess economic value, Shirley explains. These ties can be formal, as in the case of labor unions or Boy Scout troops, or informal, such as neighbors who get together for a block party or small business owners who watch out for neighborhood kids after school.

The relationships most likely to build social capital and advance community development, according to Dorfman, are those that pull people out of familiar roles, such as parent-to-teacher, or employee-to-employer. In active relationships, she explains, parent and teacher leave their usual roles and meet as neighbors, friends, or members of a community development project. They go beyond their familiar roles to work together.

FINDING A COMMUNITY'S ASSETS

In *Building Communities from the Inside Out*, John Kretzmann and John McKnight outline a plan for improving conditions in even the most devastated neighborhoods by finding and mobilizing a community's strengths. Their vision is an about-face from the old welfare state, in which "needy" people have relied on outside experts or institutions to solve their problems. Kretzmann and McKnight believe that individuals are held back if they "see themselves as people with special needs that can only be met by outsiders. They become consumers of services, with no incentive to be producers."

Instead of seeing distressed neighborhoods as places with unmet needs aching for services, these researchers from Northwestern University outline a program for developing local capacities. "Each time a person uses his or her capacity," they assert, "the community is stronger and the person more powerful."

John Morefield, a former Seattle elementary school principal and board member of a community coalition called Powerful Schools, points out the critical difference between seeing people as "needy" and as "needed." Building community partnerships, he explains in an essay called "Recreating Schools for All Children," means starting with the premise "that everyone has something to give others," no matter how poor the neighborhood. "Everyone is needed by someone. Many people who learn how to be needy seldom, if ever, experience the power of being needed."

How can a community go about identifying the abilities and gifts of its members? Kretzmann and McKnight describe an approach they call "asset mapping." Although their work focuses primarily on urban areas, NWREL's Rural Education program has been using a similar approach for developing the local capacity of rural communities.

An asset map is an inventory of the gifts, skills, and capacities of all the citizens who make up a community, whether it's an urban pocket of Chicago or a farming community in rural Idaho. Especially in places where economic forces have left citizens feeling marginalized or without worth, asset mapping reminds them that they have skills to offer, that their opinions matter to the community, that they are not *needy*, but *needed*.

Mapping a community's assets involves taking stock of all the relationships within a community. Informal citizen groups are as valuable for community-building as are the more formal institutions, such as schools, hospitals, and chambers of commerce.

Thinking about communities in this way requires seeing people differently. None of us, after all, plays

just one role in life. Finding local assets means asking one another, What is it we're good at? What are we willing to give to each other? What would we appreciate receiving back? What do we care about?

GETTING STARTED

How can a community create the kinds of partnerships and active relationships that will bring about lasting benefits? More traditional community improvement efforts have tended to be long on process: A planning phase is followed by an implementation phase. Goals and objectives are written and rewritten.

This approach may be too slow. Staff involved in NWREL's rural leadership development effort have found what community developers in larger cities have also discovered. Initial planning shouldn't take too long. Concrete projects that engage community members also help build relationships that, in turn, build local capacity.

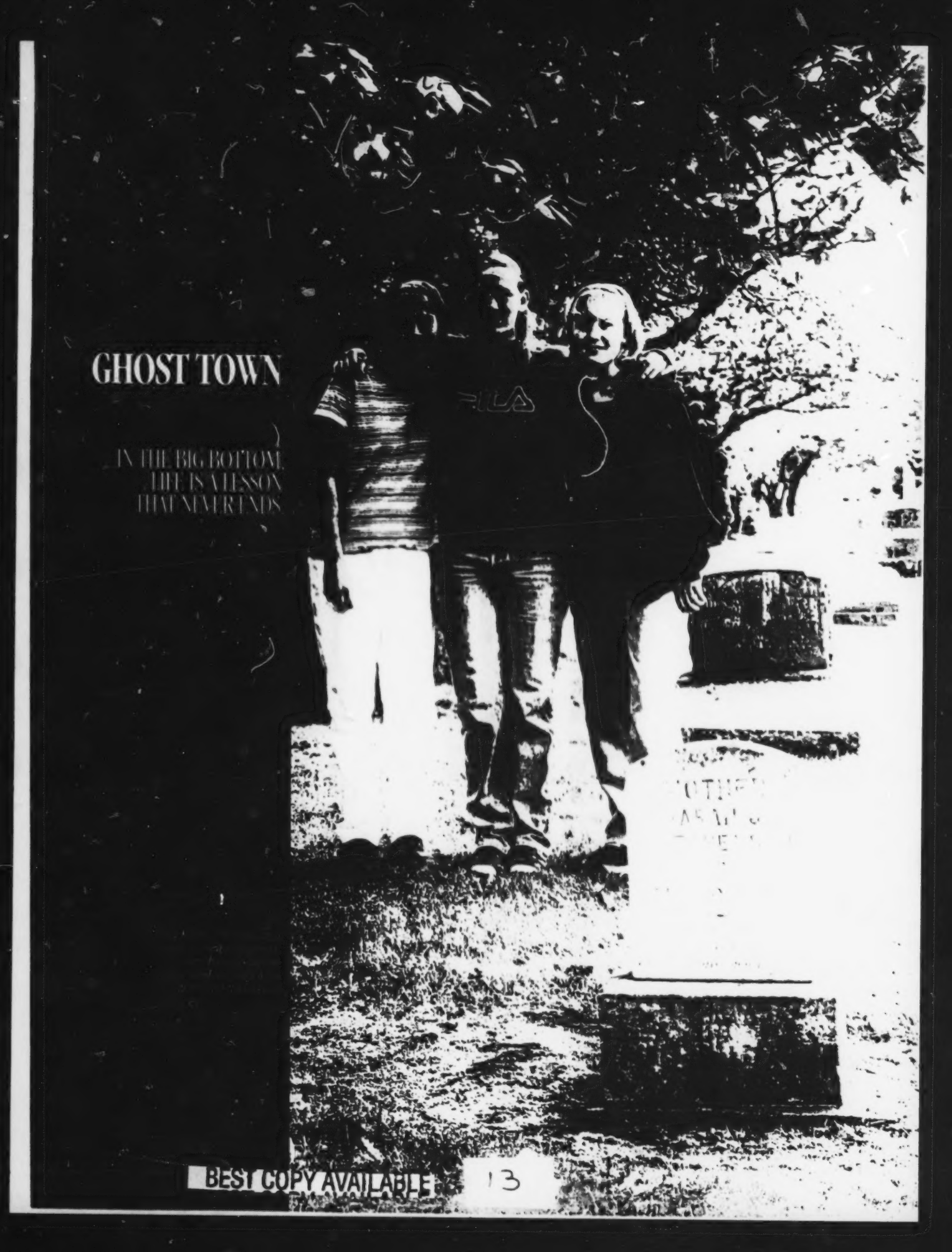
In the rural Washington community of North Franklin, for example, one of the NWREL pilot sites, citizens seemed to be getting frustrated during the early stages of the project. They complained about spending too much time in community meetings. They wanted to get started on something concrete, something to do *now*. Unexpectedly, a group of local cattlemen came to a community meeting looking for partners to help them build a livestock arena for local youth. This turned out to be a watershed event for the community. Here was an active association of folks who hadn't really been identified as a local resource. Yet, they were eager to link up with others in the community and do something positive and tangible to benefit young people. This effort to build partnership helped lead to a new collaborative organization called Partners for Achieving Community Excellence (PACE).

Because partnerships involve new ways of working and relating in a community, they can provoke controversy. Some community members may think that such programs dilute the primary instructional mission of schools, according to the *Putting the Pieces Together* guidebook. Similarly, teachers who see collaborations as "one more thing" that they have to do may understandably feel overwhelmed. Keeping schools open for longer hours, as community centers, may leave educators feeling as if their turf has been invaded. If students are participating in extended learning projects, they may draw criticism from community members unaccustomed to seeing young people out and about during the school day.

Good communication can ease the way to building lasting partnerships that make sense to everyone in a community. In *Putting the Pieces Together*, these proactive efforts are recommended to smooth the way for lasting, productive partnerships:

- **Reach out to your critics,** by inviting them to see a new program, listening to their concerns, and providing opportunities for them to contribute
- **Develop good written communication,** such as a low-cost newsletter, widely distributed throughout the community
- **Keep participants and local leaders well informed** by hosting an open house or site visits
- **Share the bottom line** to show that collaborative programs are cost effective and get results ■

Online resources: *Community Building Coming of Age* (www.ncbn.org/directory/docs/comeage2.html); *Putting the Pieces Together: Comprehensive School-Linked Strategies for Children and Families* (www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/envrnmnt/css/ppt/putting.htm); *Community Schools: Linking Home, School, and Community* (eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/community/community_schools)



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PHOTOS BY DOUGLAS WALKER

RANDLE, WASHINGTON— THE SILENCE OF THE CEMETERY IS BROKEN ONLY BY THIS: THE RASP OF A RAVEN. THE CHIRP OF A CRICKET. THE WHISPER OF A SILVERY PINWHEEL SPINNING ON A GRAVE. HERE, IN THIS QUIET CLEARING CARVED FROM A DARK FOREST, LIVES THE HISTORY OF A COMMUNITY.

Graves older than 100 years mark the passing of early settlers, some with descendants still dwelling beside the Cowlitz River in this valley called the Big Bottom. The cemetery known as Silvercreek is well tended. The trees are pruned, the grass is cut. But bird droppings mar many of the marble markers. Moss and lichen have taken hold in the dates and names engraved in the 687 headstones—names like McCain and McMahan, Zabotel and Blankenship, names as familiar to longtime residents as Rainier and Adams, Baker and St. Helens, the Cascade mountains that surround them.

Just a few yards down the road from Silvercreek, the students of White Pass High School are collecting scrub brushes and tub-and-tile cleaner for a task of honor and respect: cleaning the headstones of their ancestors. A fax from Centralia Monument has arrived in the school office, suggesting the best cleaning products and warning against working on hot days when the stones can be easily damaged.

"It's a privilege to be involved in this project," says Sunny Gaut, the senior who's organizing the clean-up for her leadership class. Gaut, born and raised in the valley, has parents who graduated from White Pass High and make their livelihood from the two top industries in the Big Bottom: timber and tourism. Her dad, a millwright at Cowlitz Stud Company, escaped last year's downsizing, which dropped half the labor force from the mills in Randle and the neighboring communities of Morton and Packwood. Her mom, a potter who mixes Mount St. Helens ash into her ceramics, has seen her business decline as the volcano's devastation passes into history. Her once-thriving shop has closed, and she now sells her pottery on consignment to other local merchants.

The Big Bottom valley is hurting. Twenty years ago, there were four mills in little Randle alone. Now there's one. "Economically, it's bleak," says Rick Anthony, Superintendent of White Pass School District. At least a quarter of the district's 900 students have a parent who lost a mill job last year, he says.

"You look at that statistic," Anthony explains, "and you say, 'Well, that's a fair chunk, but it's not *humongous*.' But the trouble is, there are so many ancillary jobs. If millworkers get laid off and move or don't spend their money, a lot of mom-and-pop businesses dry up. Those people have kids in the school system, too."

If Anthony has anything to say about it, the 300 lost jobs will amount to only a temporary setback, not one that will shake the foundations of life in the Big Bottom. That's because he sees the families in Randle, Packwood, and Glenoma—the three unincorporated clusters of homes and small businesses that form the heart of the district—as members of a community. For Anthony, community means more than just a common address. It means enduring bonds of place and purpose. Tough economic times can fray, but not break, the ties of a true community, he believes.

At the center of this community is the school district. Anthony and a committed faculty are unwinding strand after strand of collaboration, invitation, and innovation throughout the valley. Their hope is to create a solid network of linkages from one village to another, one generation to another, one person to another. It will be this network, Anthony believes, that will keep White Pass strong until the economy rebounds. No ghost town, no sorry victim of the logging crisis, here.

BIG BOTTOM

The Big Bottom valley wends through the million-acre Gifford Pinchot National Forest, following the fast, milky waters of the glacier-fed Cowlitz River. Rimmed by the white-capped mountains of Rainier and Baker to the north, St. Helens to the west, and Adams to the east, the valley is wild but not isolated, playing host to thousands of skiers, hikers, anglers, and boaters.

Building trails in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest gives students a better sense of the place they call home.

On wet days, mist hangs in the saw-scarred hills like smoke from ancient campfires. At Cowlitz Stud and Packwood Lumber Company, the mist mingles with plumes of steam pouring from the mills, owned and operated by Pacific Lumber and Shipping. Despite the slowdown in logging, trucks loaded with lumber and raw logs continuously roar up and down Highway 12, the road that links Big Bottom villages with the outside world.

Yellow buses, too, rumble along the densely wooded roads leading to the elementary schools in Randle, Glenoma, and Packwood, and to the joint middle and high schools that serve all three villages. Some students ride more than an hour each way in this sprawling district, which stretches across 650 square miles of forest land.

In a very real sense, White Pass Junior-Senior High School forms a nucleus for families scattered throughout the valley. By day, the cinder block building holds children learning to read, write, and compute. By night, the school doors are open wide. Local businesspeople learn computer skills from community college staff. Square dancers do-si-do. A new darkroom funded by a grant from Kodak draws local photographers as well as students. Literacy classes for displaced workers will begin soon. Anthony envisions a time when local businesses and civic groups will hold videoconferences and meetings at the school.

"I want this to be a total community learning center," Anthony says. "I want the whole community to feel that they are welcome, that this is their school, not just the kids' school."

"We don't just teach class during the school year, during the school day," says teacher Anita Jinks, who leads a work-based learning seminar at the high school. "We teach all learners in the community, adults as well as children, and we teach them year-round."

The White Pass school-community connection, however, is not confined to the schoolhouse. Nor does it flow only one direction. Sprucing up headstones—a project of English teacher Kathy Simonis' leadership class—is one of the ways students give to their community. The leadership students also clean up graffiti. They serve Christmas dinner at the senior center. And they collect, haul, and sort food for the local food bank. It was three years ago

that students started volunteering at the food bank as "a way to get out of class," Simonis admits. But that attitude turned around fast.

"The ladies at the food bank would reward the kids with treats," Simonis recalls. "The kids would come back to school with cookies and cupcakes. A lot of these kids come from homes where there are no cupcakes. The kids started taking ownership of the project, and pretty soon, we saw changes in classroom behavior."

"It has been my experience," Anthony asserts, "that most of the time, schools only ask for help from the community, as opposed to the other direction. Our approach is to ask not only what the community can do for the school, but also what the school can contribute to the community."

That two-way pipeline between school and community is the centerpiece of the district's ambitious strategic plan, launched four years ago when Anthony arrived at White Pass. The Northwest Laboratory and the Washington State School Directors' Association have provided support and assistance in that planning process. As one piece of the plan, the district brainstormed a list of every enterprise and entrepreneur in the Big Bottom, including civic groups, businesses, churches, elders, and community leaders—a process researchers John Kretzmann and John McKnight call "asset mapping" (see Page 8). The list was long and eclectic. Besides the obvious businesses and agencies—the mills, the ranger stations, the restaurants and motels—there were cottage industries, craftspeople, and old people with a lifetime of memories. There were doctors, pastors, and farmers. There was a poet and a stone mason, an artist and a carpenter, a local historian and a wood carver. The district is creating a database to store this wealth of local resource information.

About the same time, a Forest Service worker, a minister, a community leader, and a teacher were huddling, hatching an idea. President Clinton's Northwest Forest Plan called on the Forest Service to reach out to local people and to provide education and training in forest management and practices. To help meet that mandate, the foursome—Margaret McHugh of the Forest Service, the Rev. Dennis Dagener of the United Methodist Church, Doug Hayden of White Pass Community Services, and district school-to-work coordinator Betty Klattenhoff—pulled together funds from a state agency (the Department of Social and Health Services) and a federal program (the Job Training Partnership Act) to create a summer job program and real-life learning lab for high school kids. To help them design and run the program, they recruited a social scientist from the Pacific Northwest Research Station—the Forest Service's research arm for the region—and a pair of graduate students from the University of Washington College of Forest Resources. The research station also kicked in some money.

The program they dubbed Discovery Team has evolved into a "learning-and-earning" experience with three parts: a week of employability skills training; a week of research into local history and economy; and a week of work in the woods. The two dozen participating students go home with $500 in their pocket, blisters on their hands, and (the creators hope) a better grasp of this place on the planet they call home. Equipped with notebooks, tape recorders, and cameras, the Discovery Team has delved into old school records and historical archives. They've interviewed elders and business owners. They've searched the Internet and scoured the library. Topics the kids have explored include:

Mika Maloney designed a questionnaire to survey fellow students on work-related attitudes.

Science teacher John Mullenix helps a student measure river pebbles

WASHINGTON FOREST HISTORY—

Students traced a succession of forest dwellers and users, including native tribes that used the trees for practical and ornamental items such as tepees, canoes, masks, and spears; White homesteaders and fortune seekers; early foresters and environmentalists; and tree farmers with tracts of timberland in production for future cutting.

HISTORY OF THE YAKAMA AND COWLITZ INDIANS—

Students interviewed elders of the Cowlitz and Yakama tribes native to the White Pass area. Besides learning colorful details of tribal religion, customs, and traditions, the students heard stories of hardship and injustice, such as the forced enrollment of Indian children in boarding schools. Always returning to the theme of the forest, the students reported on the Indians' medicinal use of native plants, such as Douglas fir and huckleberry (for fighting infection), skunk cabbage (for headache relief), thimbleberry (to prevent scarring), and wild rose (to relieve sore throat).

SPECIAL FOREST PRODUCTS—

Trees are far from the only money-making product of the Gifford Pinchot. Local ranger stations issue thousands of permits for gathering and picking such natural bounty as wild huckleberries, matsutake mushrooms, and bear grass (used for basket weaving).

LOGGING TECHNOLOGY—

Relying on both written records of logging history and interviews with longtime residents, students traced the evolution of logging practices and equipment, from the days of "steam donkeys" and two-man bucksaws called "misery whips" to modern-day loaders and skidders. "Many thanks to Bud and Betty Panco for their expertise, stories, and pictures of a time existing in the memories of a few," the students wrote in their final report.

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF LOGGING—

Students explored such controversial and emotional issues as clear-cutting, reforestation, stream pollution, soil erosion, wildlife habitat, and forest regulation. They interviewed a hydrologist, a mill manager, a timber sales expert, and a silviculturist, among others.

The thick notebooks that document each summer's findings focus a high-powered lens on the community. Paging through these collections of students' words and photos is like stepping inside the community's collective memory and shared history, peopled with a colorful cast of local characters: Richard and Donna Hagen, who were evacuated from their home by rowboat during the big flood of 1996. Joyce King, original owner of the Tower Rock Trading Post, who lives in a hot-pink trailer in the forest near the Cispus River. Mary Kiona, a Yakama Indian, who regularly rode into Randle on horseback, a white bandana on her head, to trade and barter her handmade baskets, hides, and moccasins. Marty Fortin, Director of the Cispus Environmental Learning Center, who, with 100 kids and 30 adults, was stranded at the center for three nights during the big flood.

These stories, and those of elders like 80-year-old Hank Young—who still has his first-grade report card from Randle School—are recorded in the pages of the Discovery Team notebooks. Their actual voices were preserved, too. Students taped oral histories of Young and others whose family trees reach into the timbered hills of the Gifford Pinchot. The recorded memories are being edited for a documentary by the East Lewis County Historical Society.

WORKING OUTSIDE THE WOODS

Most of the dollars flowing into the White Pass area come from timber and tourism. But trees and trails don't tell the whole economic story of the Big Bottom valley.

Despite a logging slowdown that has hit local pocketbooks hard, an entrepreneurial spirit thrives. Drive down Highway 12, which cuts through the northern edge of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, and you'll find all sorts of small to medium-sized enterprises and cottage industries. You can stay at a B& B, board your horse, buy a handmade bird house, or tour Mount St. Helens by helicopter. You can order a hand-hewn log house. Visit a trout farm. Or taste a pinot noir at a local winery. At the foot of the forested hills, you'll see tidy farms that raise small herds of cattle or dairy cows, rows of deep-green Christmas trees, and bulbs that bloom wildly in the spring.

Mill jobs have been the mainstay of the valley. But there's a wellspring of other opportunities for the creative and the innovative. That's one of the lessons kids get from their teachers at the White Pass School District. Showing students new routes to a paycheck has taken on the status of a mission for district educators.

"We need to open their eyes to some of the alternatives and possibilities," says Superintendent Rick Anthony. Here's a glimpse of the many work-related projects, units, and curricula at White Pass.

With support from a federal Carl Perkins sex-equity grant, students are exploring nontraditional jobs. For the kids in the valley, that's practically everything. "If you don't work in the woods, in a mill, for the Forest Service or the school, it's pretty much a nontraditional job," notes teacher Gail Mullins.

Beginning in elementary school, students get to experience the business world firsthand through a business-simulation program called "Mini Real." Kids try on all sorts of hats — banker, judge, business owner. They learn about hiring and firing, balancing the books, and that most basic of job skills — getting to work every day, on time. "We want students to understand that they need to know how to communicate, how to write, and how to compute for a *reason* — that the curriculum has a practical purpose," says Anthony. "We're trying to provide a background for students to become successful citizens, to achieve a standard that is competitive."

Fifth- and sixth-graders are tapping away at the keyboards of nine brand-new laptop computers purchased with a $12,000 grant from the Washington Software Foundation. After learning basic skills, including Internet research, the students will host a computer night, passing on their skills to interested community members. School-community liaison Betty Klattenhoff envisions a laptop outreach, as well. "Say that Packwood Hardware wants to learn Excel," she says. "Instead of that businessperson driving all the way to the community center in Morton for training, why couldn't one of our students go up to Packwood and teach him right in his building and share her knowledge with him?"

A work-based learning seminar called Visions hooks kids up with part-time jobs and broadens their awareness of occupational options. Student projects have included creating a local employer database, conducting a labor-market survey of East Lewis County, and establishing a student-run job line. Job openings are posted on the local cable TV service, which also runs community meetings taped by television-production students.

In collaboration with the local *Morton Journal*, elementary students shadowed reporters and editors, toured the newspaper offices, and produced a student-written newspaper called *The Tiger Tribune*, complete with display advertising. Ad sales paid for gift certificates for the young reporters.

High-school graphic arts students design newspaper ads for local businesses and paint holiday scenes on storefront windows.

A greenhouse (bought at a bargain-basement price from a now-defunct nursery) provides business experience to special-needs students, who grow and sell plants in a horticulture program.

With guidance from high-school graphic arts teacher Laurie Judd, students are launching a photography business. They'll sell their shots of school activities such as sports teams, school dances, and student clubs (developed in the school's own Kodak-funded darkroom) to other students, journalists, and parents.

For her civics class, student Mika Maloney designed a questionnaire and surveyed fellow students on their awareness of job options in the White Pass area. More than 60 percent of ninth- and 10th-graders and 50 percent of 11th-graders said the area offers no jobs that interest them. Kids who *did* see possibilities most often cited such occupations as mechanic, construction worker, forester, geologist, massage and occupational therapist, and electrician.

Students make excursions to Portland, Seattle, and other communities outside the valley, where they get to see people working in "a whole different world," Mullins says. One class visited a construction site at the University of Washington where a new wildlife and fisheries building is going up. "The students saw people doing all kinds of different jobs and learned about the rules of different unions — such as the cement masons and the plumbers unions," says Mullins.

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LIVING LAB

"When we turned those kids loose, it was awesome," says Roger Clark, the Forest Service social scientist who helped develop the Discovery Team concept and design a survey of community strengths, needs, and resources. Too often, Clark says, social scientists look at people and analyze them, instead of working with them. Community suspicion about Forest Service motives gave way to cooperation when Clark and his colleagues realized that their job was not to observe the community from an outsiders' perspective, but to help the community discover and better understand itself.

"We tapped into a huge reservoir of talent and energy," Clark recalls. "That's the real notion of partnership."

Discovery Team is an experiment in "social learning," says White Pass teacher and lifelong resident Gail Mullins, who supervises the summer teams. Because social learning is open ended, students and teachers should anticipate and tolerate ambiguity, Mullins says. She quotes David Korten, founder of the People-Centered Development Forum, who describes social learning as "a messy, even chaotic process in which error and unpredicted outcomes are routine." Social learning depends, Mullins says, on local initiative and control (as opposed to letting outside "experts" take the lead).

In Discovery Team, learning also depends on student (versus teacher) initiative. With teachers guiding rather than dictating, students have broad latitude in topic choice, research procedures, and presentation format.

To launch the Discovery Team in 1995, the students held a public forum, sending invitations to key community members identified in the district's strategic planning process. Up and down the valley, residents answered "yes" to the question, Are you willing to talk with students and tell them what you know about the history, economy, and environment of the Big Bottom? In four years, only two residents have turned students away.

"If we reach out and ask, they're there for us," says school-community liaison Betty Klattenhoff ("Betty K" to the locals), a district leader in finding funding and linking kids with the larger community. Echoing the pivotal line in the baseball fantasy movie *Field of Dreams*, Klattenhoff believes that "if you build it, they will come."

The third component of the Discovery Team experience—working in the woods—links students with Forest Service workers. It's a linkage that has some baggage. A lot of White Pass kids, sons and daughters of loggers and millworkers, have grown up viewing the Forest Service as cops enforcing the rules and regs of the woodlands. In a timber-dependent place hit hard by new logging limits, an often-bitter "us and them" outlook has prevailed, says McHugh of the Forest Service.

As one of the originators of the Discovery Team, McHugh had great hopes for forging new attitudes between the Forest Service and locals. Tensions have indeed begun to dissolve in the mist of the national forest and the sweat of adolescent labor. Using such specialized tools as a grubber hoe and a "Polaski" (a small shovel used to dig fire trails), students are clearing the way for wider use of the woods. They've hacked out a "barrier-free" trail at Woods Creek, making it accessible to wheelchairs. They've built an outdoor amphitheater at Iron Creek Campground. They've made a wheelchair-friendly fishing ramp at Takahlakh Lake. They've erected a picnic shelter at Covel Creek.

While the high school Discovery Team is hacking trails through the undergrowth, middle schoolers are catching Cascade frogs and collecting samples of plankton for environmental-impact studies. These 15 to 20 kids are the Summer Scientists—young naturalists exploring their world under the tutelage of science teacher John Mullenix and an array of forestry experts.

The Summer Scientists program, paid for and administered by Centralia Community College, is free to kids. Parents provide transportation to the ponds and trailheads. At summer's end, kids present their findings at the ranger station. At first, McHugh had to twist arms to get anybody to show up. Now, the agency employees willingly give up their lunch hour, crowding into a packed room to listen.

"It's so wonderful to hear students explain concepts many of us didn't learn until college," McHugh says.

White Pass kids have a million acres in their backyard—dense

timberland ribbed with creeks and canyons, brimming with lakes and ponds, alive with bugs, birds, and beasts. This vast living laboratory is unmatched by even the jazziest equipment or most dazzling software in wealthier suburban schools.

"There is a lot of fascinating science that can be learned there," says Mullenix.

Taking full advantage of this living lab, White Pass teachers are collaborating with Forest Service employees and scientists on still more lessons that take the classroom into the woods. Seventh- and eighth-graders are helping the Forest Service study cross-sections of Camp Creek, which was restored after the disastrous floods of 1996. With training from Forest Service hydrologist John Gier, students go into the woods to collect random samples of pebbles in the stream bed and calculate the depth and slope of the stream. Back in the classroom, teams of students painstakingly measure each rock with calipers, and then record the data and calculate averages. From these measurements, scientists can tell whether the stream is cutting down or filling in.

During the 20-year study, scientists and students will also examine stream-dwelling macroinvertebrates (stone flies are an example), count large woody debris, and monitor percentages of sun to shade. Only students who become certified by the Forest Service contribute to the official study. "The students have to be very accurate so that we can really use that data," explains McHugh.

There are chemistry lessons and water-quality studies, too. Students are examining, for example, the impact of acid rain and camping on local lakes. In earth sciences, a Forest Service geologist teaches kids how to take a stratographic cross-section and identify fossils.

Mullenix and his wife, Carolyn, a third-grade teacher, are working with silviculturist Ed Thompkins to create an integrated curriculum for elementary and middle-level students. The lessons—which will blend art, literature, and science into a cohesive unit—will connect field trips with classroom activities, such as reading the children's classic, *The Giving Tree*. The goal, says John Mullenix, is to reach all kinds of learners by mixing all sorts of learning strategies—cognitive, psychomotor, tactile, and affective (emotional).

The teachers and foresters are forming what Mullenix calls "a web of interactions." "These collaborations have to be long-term," he stresses. "We become friends. We're partners."

After several years of meetings and joint projects among the Forest Service, the school district, and the community, relations between the groups "have absolutely improved," Mullenix says. McHugh agrees. In the past, community meetings could be combative, with law-enforcement officers standing by. But recent meetings about such controversial issues as road closures and firewood restrictions—meetings that in the past might have been "very tense"—have been congenial, McHugh relates.

"It's just an amazing difference," she says. "Even personally, I've seen a difference in how people greet me at the grocery store.

"Perceptions have changed," McHugh explains. "People see us more as partners in the community. They have a sense that we're all working together now. That's a new role for us."

Working in the woods with their Polaskis and Abneys (hand levels used for measuring stream slope), students gain a lot more than knowledge of trail construction or science. They also gain a connection to their roots, a "sense of place" that anchors them.

"It doesn't make any difference what they choose to do with their life," says Mullins. "They have this foundation, and it's always going to be here. I want them to feel good about staying here or coming back—being here because they want to, not because they have to."

In the midst of this severe economic slump, when school levies in most surrounding communities are failing or barely squeaking by, White Pass School District has tapped into a deep well of support. Three-fourths of the residents voted "yes" on a recent levy—all the more surprising because only one in four White Pass families has children in school.

"If we only work with and show that we are interested in the 25 percent who have kids in school, I think we are missing the boat," says Superintendent Anthony. "I think we could potentially come out big losers.

"You've really got to go out on a one-on-one basis—you have to solicit people. You need to take a proactive approach." ■

THE WORLD IS COMING TO US

Story and photos by DENISE JARRETT

WITH THE STRENGTH
THAT COMES FROM
EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGE,
WE LEARN TO DEAL WITH THE FUTURE;
AT THE SAME TIME, WE
STAND FIRMLY PLANTED
IN OUR CULTURAL ROOTS.

—Tanquik Theatre,
Yup'ik performance group

Seen from the air, the riverine delta in Southwest Alaska displays its fall splendor with a sprawl of russet, green, and yellow tundra. Traversed by numberless tributaries and sloughs of the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers, with overflow collecting into darkened ponds, the delta appears as much lake as it is land.

Beneath the pond surfaces can be seen brush strokes of chartreuse that turn out to be long reeds bending in the wind-rubbed current. A pair of whistling swans rests among the bog orchid and cotton grass. Above them, a squadron of geese passes over. It is the time of the great gathering. The abundance of water in the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta provides critical habitat for migrating waterfowl and shorebirds.

In the lower delta lies the Kanektok, a river dotted with sandbars and teeming with chum, king, and sockeye salmon. Where the Kanektok empties into the Bering Sea lies the village of Quinhagak (say: KWIN-a-hawk) The visitor to this Yup'ik Eskimo community of 550 is struck by a sense of exhilarating isolation. To the west across the shallow waters of the bay, the Bering Sea cuts a dark band beneath the sky; to the south, there's the faint outline of the Kilbuck mountain range. Elsewhere, the tundra rolls undisturbed.

Quinhagak is 70 miles south of Bethel, a community of 5,000 which serves as air transportation hub for the region, and 400 miles west of Anchorage. For travelers from afar, it is accessible only by small plane or boat. For local travel, residents use four-wheelers, snowmobiles, and, occasionally, dogsleds. It doesn't take long for the visitor to realize that this remote community is thriving. A couple of dump trucks roar incongruously along the village's one road, carrying gravel foundation for a new airstrip and a health clinic/washeteria. Four-wheelers crisscross the village throughout the day, carrying people to work, school, the village store, post office—typical errands in an exceptional place.

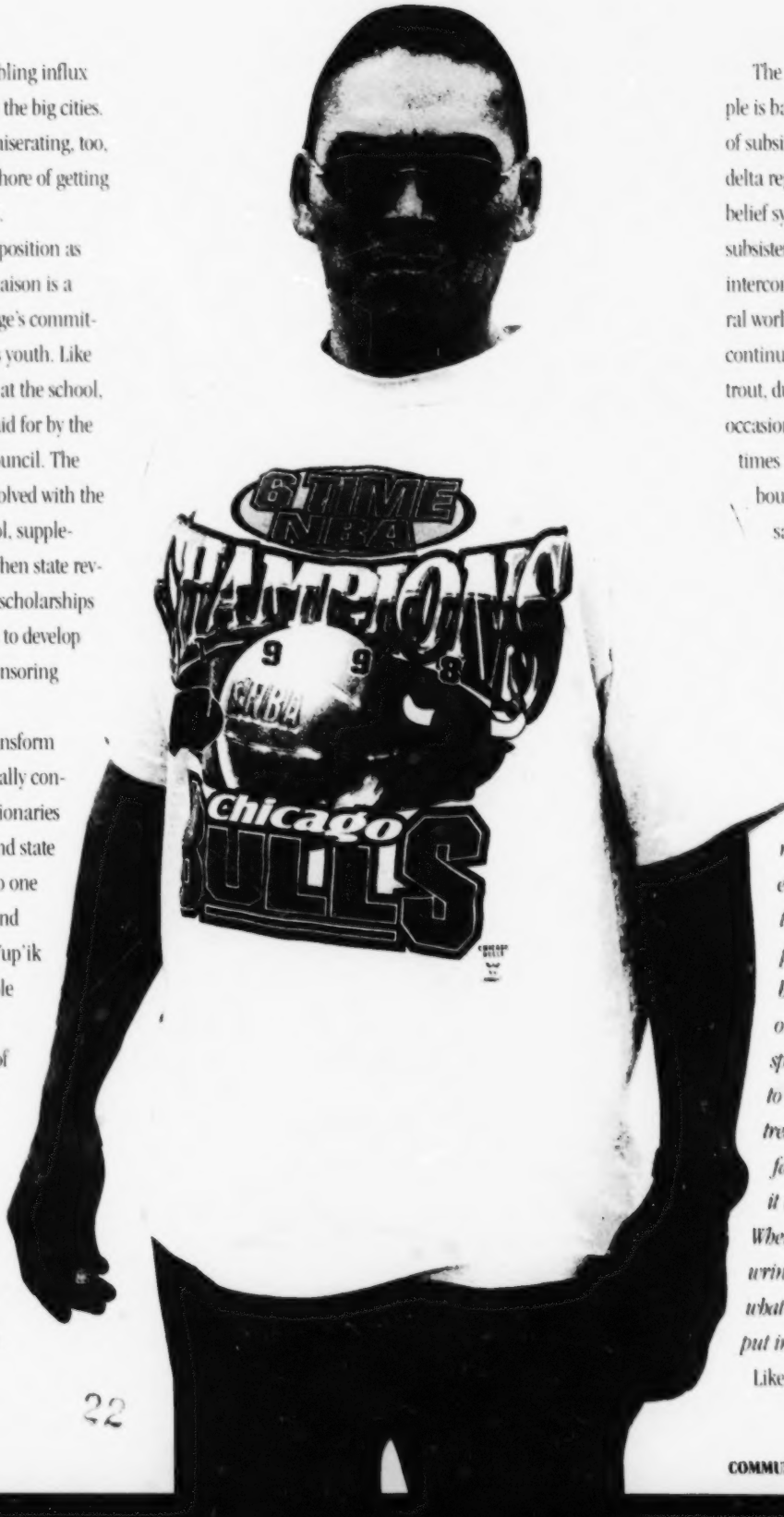
On one cold morning, Samson Mann shrugs on his jacket and leaves his office in the Quinhagak school, called by its Yup'ik name, *Kuinerrarmiut Elitnaurviat*. Outside, he climbs onto a four-wheeler and drives a short distance to a wooden house raised on stilts above the tundra. As school-community liaison, he is here to check on a student's unexcused absence.

Inside, he learns that the student has overslept and, while the roused youth is dressing, Mann sits chatting with the parents at a kitchen table. As often happens, the talk turns to fishing: this season's

salmon run; the troubling influx of fly fishermen from the big cities. There's a bit of commiserating, too, about the universal chore of getting children off to school.

Mann's full-time position as school-community liaison is a reflection of the village's commitment to educating its youth. Like some other staff jobs at the school, Mann's position is paid for by the Kwinhagak Tribal Council. The council is closely involved with the activities of the school, supplementing its budget when state revenues fall, awarding scholarships and helping students to develop career plans, and sponsoring summer programs.

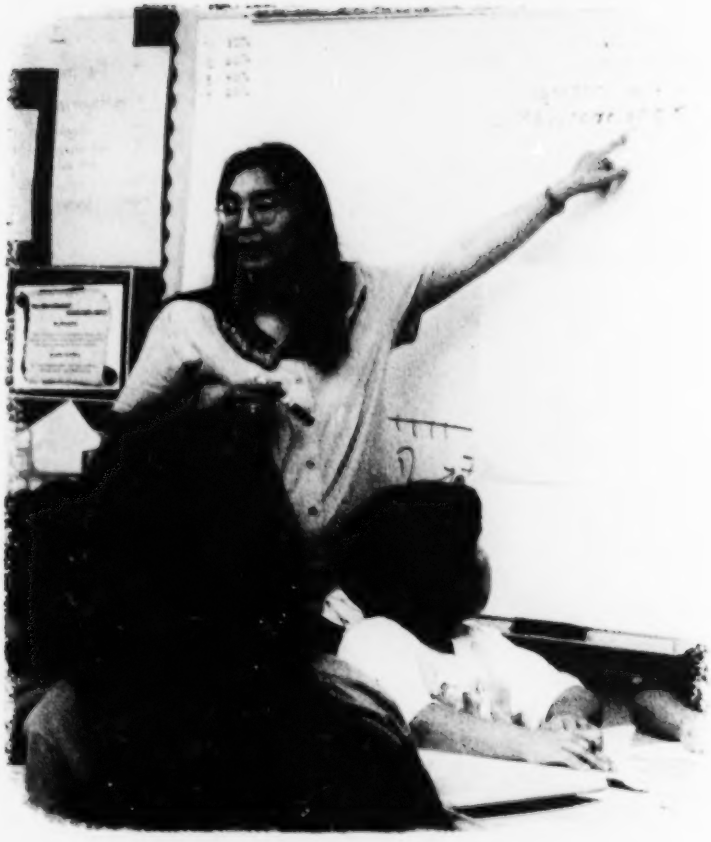
Determined to transform the school—historically controlled by White missionaries and distant federal and state bureaucracies —into one that plays a central and relevant role in this Yup'ik community, the people of Quinhagak have assumed leadership of important aspects of their children's education. They are achieving this transformation by infusing the school environment with Yup'ik language and culture.



The culture of the Yup'ik people is based on thousands of years of subsisting on the wildlife of the delta region. Their ceremonies and belief system revolve around this subsistence lifestyle, expressing their interconnectedness with the natural world. The people of Quinhagak continue to harvest salmon and trout, ducks and geese, seal and the occasional Beluga whale. Sometimes a moose or migrating caribou is taken. While picking salmonberries out on the tundra, villagers take care to watch for the occasional brown bear.

"We pick berries, some people call them cloudberries, we call them salmonberries," recalls Quinhagak elder, Carrie Pleasant. "In the old days, we would put the berries in wooden barrels and top them with one-stem grass and wild spinach. If you were going to make akutaq *(a sweet treat), you took the tallow, fat from the reindeer, cut it up and put it in a skillet. When it was cool, you would wring the fat out. You put what's left with sugar in a bowl, put in seal oil and the berries."*

Like many other Alaska Natives,



Dora Strunk, who grew up in Quinhagak, teaches Yup'ik phrases to her class of third- and fourth-graders.

the Yup'ik people have felt pressured by 100 years of Western influence to relinquish their language, beliefs, and ceremonies. In villages across the state, the all-too-common result has been to diminish the people's core identity, leaving them demoralized and prone to alcoholism, domestic abuse, and suicide. Because theirs was one of the last regions of Alaska to be occupied by Westerners, the Yup'ik people of the delta were able to sustain a stronger link to their language and some traditions well into this century. This twist of fate, as well as recent legislation supporting bilingual education and self-governance by tribal councils, empowers people in villages like Quinhagak to maintain a leadership role in the education of their children, seeing to it that their youth are educated in Yup'ik as well as Western knowledge.

Today, students at Quinhagak learn not only the core curriculum of a Western education, but the skills and values of their ancestors, as well. Paid an honorarium by the tribal council, village elders regularly deliver guest lectures at the school. They teach students carving and basket weaving, Eskimo dancing and mask ceremonies. They show how to prepare and preserve salmon, how to sew seal and mink pelts. The teachers link this traditional knowledge to core Western concepts in science, social studies, geography, health, mathematics, and language arts.

For many, the most meaningful change in the school has been the adoption of Yup'ik as the primary language of instruction from kindergarten through fourth grade. Students study English an hour each day until they reach the fifth grade when the practice is reversed: English becomes the primary language of instruction, and Yup'ik reading and writing is taught separately.

"Research in bilingual education shows that if students learn to read and understand science, math, and other subjects in their own language, they establish a firm base from which they can then transfer that knowledge into English," says Carol Barnhardt, Assistant Professor of Education at University of Alaska Fairbanks. Barnhardt has been working with Quinhagak Principal, John Mark, as part of the Alaska Onward to Excellence (AOTE) program administered by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. Since 1995, Quinhagak educators, AOTE team members, and staff from the Lower Kuskokwim School District have worked together to identify learning goals and to develop a school reform implementation plan for the Quinhagak school. The school has chosen as its primary student learning goal, "to communicate more effectively in Yup'ik."

In Dora Strunk's third- and fourth-grade classroom, there is an alphabet key on the wall. To a non-Native, it looks familiar until one notices that eight letters are "missing." This is the Yup'ik alphabet, originally devised by the Moravian missionaries in the early part of the century and later developed further by orthographers from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. The children are doing a writing exercise, and Strunk calls on them one by one to read from their work.

Chantal reads, "*Cuqtaunrilu!*" (Don't mess around with that!)

Next, Walter reads, "*Mayuraviqnak!*" (Quit climbing!)

Strunk, 37, grew up in Quinhagak. Like most people her generation and older, she had to leave Quinhagak to attend high school. (Not until a 1976 Alaska Supreme Court ruling was it mandated that every village be provided with a public high school.) By example, her parents taught her to value learning and literacy.

"They both stressed the importance of going to school," Strunk says. "My dad quit when he was in ninth grade, but I always saw him reading. We always had magazines like *Newsweek*, *U.S. News & World Report*, and *Life*. From looking at my dad reading, it got me curious —why is he always reading? I started reading those magazines in grade school, because we didn't have TV back then!" she laughs. "My mom only got up to the sixth grade, but she was always teaching Native crafts and how to cook and how to sew. My dad fished and we'd go egg hunting. Before there were any four-wheelers, we walked to pick salmonberries, blackberries, and cranberries. Now that I have my own children, I find that I'm passing that—the way I was brought up—on to them, too."

The Lower Kuskokwim School District is a driving force behind efforts to preserve and cultivate the Yup'ik culture and language in Southwest Alaska. Quinhagak is one of 21 villages served by the district, which encompasses 44,000 square miles (an area about the size of Pennsylvania). The district's curriculum department creates bilingual programs that reflect a Yup'ik emphasis and trains school staff in effective bilingual methodologies and practices. The district has been prolific in its development of Yup'ik language materials to support the curriculum. One such development is a yearlong thematic unit that integrates Yup'ik activities, beliefs, and experience with

Retired from teaching, Carrie Pleasant often returns to the classroom as a guest speaker.

academic content areas in mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts. Quinhagak has incorporated this program into its curriculum.

Upingaurluta, "getting ready for life," is a series of standards-based thematic units founded on aspects of the Yup'ik cycle of life: the self and one's role in the community; gathering food and preparing for hunts; clothing and celebrating with masks; survival skills and fish camp; and recreation and storytelling.

It would be nearly impossible to accomplish this kind of culture-focused curriculum and instruction without the participation of people from the community. In addition to inviting elders to speak to the students, the school employs among the highest numbers of Yup'ik certified teachers in the district. Last year, students in first through sixth grades were taught by Yup'ik-speaking certified teachers, and every class through 12th grade had a Yup'ik-speaking teacher's aide.

The elders help to strengthen the link between the present and the past—an essential combination, many believe, for the well-being and future success of their young people.

"You get a feeling of togetherness and support from people like

Carrie Pleasant," says Emma Petluska, a lifelong resident of Quinhagak and the school's detention supervisor. "If everyone in the community encourages children, it would just grow from that. The school is not the only place for education, it's all day long. It involves everybody that the kids know. It has to be that way for children to learn."

"I talk to the students about how we used to use and store fish without electricity," says Pleasant, who taught first grade at the Quinhagak school for 22 years. Now retired, she is a frequent guest speaker, instructing students in some of the old ways. "I show them how to cut the skin of the salmon and hang them to dry, then smoke them. You can put the fish heads with the liver and gills to make stinkheads. You top the fish heads and things with grass and wet moss, let it ferment for two weeks, then wash and eat them. In the winter, we would catch blackfish by cutting a square hole in the ice, then putting a net down into the water. If you use your hand, the fish will swim away."

The school's principal, John Mark, also grew up in Quinhagak. He was among the first in the village to earn a college degree. After obtaining an associate of arts degree in bilingual education through the Bethel campus of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Mark earned a bachelor's degree in education from the Oregon College of Education. After teaching for a few years, he returned to college at University of Alaska Anchorage and earned a master's degree in public school administration. He's been principal at the Quinhagak school for four years.

"When I was growing up," recalls Mark, 44, "the village depended heavily on subsistence. Now, with technology, refrigeration, more flights in and out of the villages, hunting equipment —these all play a big part in making hunting and subsistence gathering much easier and keeping food much longer. People don't have to spend as much time on subsistence. With these improvements, people have more time on their hands. What are they going to do with it? Now they must be educated and find something for themselves to do."

For the younger generation, new tasks are replacing subsistence work. "The more mature this generation gets," Marks says, "the more they understand the importance of education to their livelihoods and survival. There is now record keeping, IRS, employment records.

See THE WORLD, Page 52

Hands-on lessons in Native crafts teach students the skills of their ancestors.

OPENING DOORS

Carmen Tsuboi Chan, Principal of John Muir Elementary, converses with Grace Lee of Powerful Schools.

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SEATTLE'S INNER CITY DRUMS UP POWERFUL SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION

Story and photos by SUZIE BOSS

On the south side of Seattle, red low school buses move against a colorful backdrop of urban life. Kids wearing backpacks spill off the buses, kicking at autumn leaves and pushing for sidewalk positions as they head for home. Murals in vibrant hues celebrate everything from baseball to music to ethnic heritage. Open for business signs advertise goods and services in many languages. Vietnamese. Spanish. English. Somalian — all are spoken here in the Rainier Valley, a hilly neighborhood tucked between Interstate 5 and Lake Washington. To many local residents, the area is better known as the South End, one of Seattle's poorest and most racially diverse neighborhoods.

This isn't a face of Seattle most visitors will recognize. You can't see the Space Needle from here. Cappuccino vendors don't camp on every street corner. The glass and chrome sky scrapers of the downtown are visible from only a few vantage points along Martin Luther King Jr. Way, and seem a world apart from this area's low-slung commercial architecture. Most of the neighborhood homes are modest, although they get grander along the streets that line Lake Washington.

It takes an inside view to appreciate what's really going on in this neighborhood. At the local branch library for instance, two South End mothers strike up a conversation about why they live where they live. "My friends in the suburbs are always asking me, 'why do you want to stay in that inner city?' one says to the other. Then she answers her own question, leaving her friend to nod in agreement. "In the suburbs, can kids take after-school classes right in their own neighborhood? Can parents take computer classes at night? Are there adults tutoring first graders, making sure they really learn to read? Do they live in a place where, thank goodness, not everybody looks the same?" Swinging her arms wide to take in the whole lively urban scene, she practically exclaims: "Look at everything we have *right here*!"

Pride is definitely in the air these days in the Rainier Valley, and for good reason. A grass roots effort to uplift the whole community has taken hold here, and is succeeding in a most powerful way.

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The story begins back in 1990 when a handful of folks got together to talk about their neighborhood. Greg Tuke remembers those initial conversations. "We were people who knew each other informally, from potluck suppers and kids' soccer games," he says. "Because our children attended different schools, we knew that each school had different strengths. One was great at teaching environmental science, but had no computers. Another had computers, but no environmental science program. How could we use those individual strengths, and draw on the diversity of this neighborhood, to make all the local schools great?" From the beginning, Tuke says, the idea was to use the community's own resources to create "world-class schools."

Coincidentally, a few elementary school principals had been having a similar conversation. Physically, their schools were in good repair. Three of the four neighborhood schools had been newly renovated or rebuilt. But because of poverty and family pressures, many students were not thriving. Nearly two-thirds of the children in this neighborhood qualify for free or reduced-price lunch programs. About a quarter are the first in their families to attend school in this country. How could the principals work together to help these children and their families break out of a cycle of poverty and underachievement?

Those early, isolated conversations led to a meeting that drew about a dozen parents, educators, and other community members who weren't connected to the schools. The group clicked. They developed a vision with three ambitious goals:

- Improve student performance for all children
- Strengthen the community
- Create a successful and cost-effective model for school reform

Before long, the group had a name, a plan of action, and some seed money from the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods. In 1991, Powerful Schools was launched as a coalition of four elementary schools and two community organizations. Tuke soon left his job in the private sector, where he worked in community relations and grant management for a savings and loan, to direct the new nonprofit organization.

Today, Powerful Schools is praised as a model of school-community collaboration. Hundreds of local residents of all ages take advantage of community education classes offered at four elementary schools. A reading enrichment program is so successful at raising students' test scores that it has been adopted as a "best practices" model by the state superintendent's office. Hundreds of families attend "Family Fun Nights," where they share a meal, participate in educational programs, and strengthen the bond between home and school. "A Night at the Rap," an annual event that showcases the neighborhood's artists and performers, draws an enthusiastic audience of about 800. A handbook describing the Powerful Schools approach has been distributed to more than 200 other communities.

From the perspective of the school district, Powerful Schools looks like "a very useful model," says Sharon Green, Chief Academic Officer of Seattle Public Schools. "It envelops the student and staff in a support web. This cannot help but affect academic achievement and enhance self-esteem." Powerful Schools, Green believes, "changes how students feel about themselves and how the community feels about schools."

Yet even as the program has grown and evolved, Powerful Schools hasn't lost sight of its three initial goals. Helping kids, helping the community, and sharing with others—those continue to be the stars by which this program navigates.

Young dramatists enact an impromptu scene during an after-school theater workshop

What helps children succeed in school? "We all know that parent involvement is critical," says Tuke. At 46, he has been both observer and participant as his own two children have moved through adolescence and the teen years. "But how do we get all parents more involved? How do we reach out to them, if they aren't making a connection with school when their children are young?"

Serving a mixed community, including many low-income and single-parent families as well as middle-class and even a few wealthy families, Powerful Schools provides the support that makes it easier for all parents to walk into the classroom. Day care is provided so that parents with young children can volunteer their time. Training is provided so that parents who are unsure of their own skills can develop self-confidence. If money is an obstacle to participation, Powerful Schools will even hire parents as tutors. And for parents who may have unpleasant memories of their own school days, Powerful Schools makes sure these interactions are positive.

One morning in October, for instance, about 30 parents, grand-parents, and even one great-grand-

Artists-to-be learn about painting landscapes in a Community School class.

mother attended a training session on the fundamentals of reading. For the rest of the school year, they will use these skills while tutoring first-graders in a program Powerful Schools calls its Reading Club. The one-to-one approach is time intensive. Participating first-graders receive daily individual attention, 30 minutes per session. But the rewards have been significant. Achievement levels have increased among youngsters identified as being the most at risk of academic failure. According to their parents, the children's attitudes about learning have soared along with their test scores.

Val Wells, a veteran tutor and neighborhood parent, says she has seen "remarkable results" from the Reading Club program. Many children need emotional support as much as academic help. "Sometimes they just need extra mother love," Wells says. "They have a lot of stuff going on in their lives. So we give them a hug, but we also give them firm and consistent rules."

The one-to-one approach creates a bond between tutor and child, and also a chance to catch problems that might be missed in a group setting. Tutors might notice which students need eye exams, hearing tests, or speech therapy, for instance. They talk regularly with classroom teachers. "We work as a whole team to help each child succeed," Wells explains.

Last year, she watched one little boy become the first in his family to master the fundamentals of reading. His older siblings had failed in school, "but he made it. By the end of the year, he could *read*." Another tutor said she watched one student evolve from "a chronic behavior problem into a budding rocket scientist. He just took off," she said, over the course of the school year.

A number of other Powerful Schools programs support students' academic success in different ways. Powerful Writers, for instance, brings published authors into the classroom to teach writing skills and give classroom teachers fresh ideas about how to enhance literacy. Powerful Buddies matches volunteer mentors with students who need another caring, consistent adult in their lives. Powerful Arts brings professional artists into the schools for residencies and performances. Rather than being add-ons, however, each new program is introduced with care so that it connects school and community in a deliberate way. Every year, Tuke believes, the program gets "more focused, more specific" in its approach to helping students succeed.

HELPING THE COMMUNITY

During the 1997-98 school year, 650 children and adults participated in more than 75 community education classes offered by Powerful Schools at its four elementary school sites. Where did they find instructors for everything from Web-page design to bicycle repair to hip hop?

"All the resources are right here in this community," says Tuke. After seven years of running the program, he stresses, "That's the biggest lesson I've learned. What's often perceived as a poor community is actually very rich with talents and skills."

When Powerful Schools was just getting off the ground, the program founders walked the neighborhood to conduct a door-to-door survey. They asked, "What would you like the schools to offer you? And what could you offer the schools?"

Some people just wanted to be able to use the gym at night. Others had more specific requests, such as access to computers or after-school programs for their kids that would be more enriching than day care. And many seemed downright flattered when asked what skills and talents they had to share with their neighbors.

Rather than housing all the community education classes in

GETTING TECHNOLOGY TO THE GRASSROOTS

Tia Locke knows how to move in many different worlds. She's comfortable in the classroom because she's a former teacher. She's at home in the professional world where she now works in public broadcasting. She knows how to talk to computer people because she's one herself. And she knows her way around Seattle's Rainier Valley because it's home. "I'm a Northwest native," she says.

Through a grassroots program she calls the Great Computer Giveaway, Locke has been building bridges between these different — and usually separate — worlds. She convinces large companies that are upgrading equipment to donate their used computers to her program. With the help of nonprofit partners such as Powerful Schools, she finds local families who are eager to join the information age but can't afford to buy the expensive hardware. She also matches families with technology experts in their own neighborhoods who can help them understand the lingo of the computer culture. "I'll say, 'you know so-and-so, your neighbor? He runs this microbusiness where he works with computers — and he'll help you.'"

Locke calls the grassroots technology program "a gentle way to operate."

"It loops around nicely," she says. "The computers are free to the families who need them, but I suggest they do some community service. They can contribute whatever they do best."

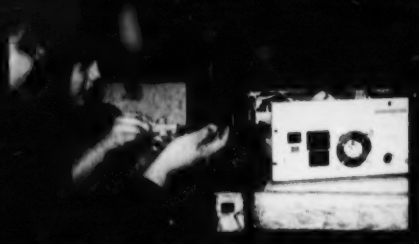
The first families to receive computers were veteran volunteers from Powerful Schools. "It was a nice way to say thank you for their time," Locke says. Now, five years later, she has given away more than 500 computers.

The program is deliberately free of red tape and rules. "I don't operate with a lot of criteria," Locke explains. "If people have time to give, maybe they can help me hand equipment. This is the way friends help one another."

One woman, Locke says with a grin, has edged her way up to a Pentium "by making the world's best greens and corn bread for community gatherings."

Instead of just giving computers away, Locke takes the program one step further. Families also receive training so they know how to load software, use the Internet, and understand the jargon that can be confusing, if not downright intimidating, to nontechies. Before long, parents and children are talking the talk themselves. Powerful Schools provides additional classroom support through its community education program, using computer labs in local elementary schools.

What motivates this community member to give her time so freely? Locke first became acquainted with the concept of "giveaways" when she was a girl. Because of her father's government job, her family often lived on reservations. There, she saw many such exchanges take place between tribal members. "The ideas, you give freely, and you don't expect anything in return. But you keep your mind open to receive. That appeals to me." And although there's no monetary compensation, the personal rewards are enormous, she says. "This is way fun."



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Ashley Nance teaches coaxes fourth-graders to put their senses into their writing.

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one location, Powerful Schools moves the site each day. That way, people get past local school boundaries and mix with neighbors from throughout the community.

By providing training to volunteers, Powerful Schools also uplifts the confidence and self-esteem of the whole community. A mom named Yuriko Ueda, who moved to Seattle from her native Japan, said volunteering her time "taught me how things work" within the culture of American schools. She no longer feels like an outsider in her new community. Many parents who begin as volunteers develop skills that lead to new jobs and brighter futures. Adds Ueda, who was recently hired as an office aide: "I've learned alongside my children. We've all been in school together."

SHARING WITH OTHERS

From its inception, Powerful Schools has attempted to create a model that other communities could borrow. "Our ideas weren't brand new," Tuke says. "We all know that parent involvement makes sense. We know that community schools are a good idea. But we've tried to refine that and bring a focus to what we do."

When asked by other communities about the lessons that have been learned in Seattle, Tuke offers these highlights:

- **Involve the principals.** Community-led reform efforts that don't engage the local school leader won't get off the ground. All four principals at Powerful Schools' partner schools serve on the program's board of directors.
- **Think collaboratively.** Powerful Schools brings together four Seattle Public Schools (John Muir, Hawthorne, Whitworth, and Orca) and two local organizations (Mt. Baker Community Club and Columbia City Neighborhood Association), creating a broader base of support and stronger ties across the community.
- **Attract a critical mass.** Getting a program started means enlisting support from a core of community members, including some with no attachments to the schools. Says Tuke: "There are plenty of people out there who want to help the schools and give back to the community, but they may not know how to become involved. Provide them with a way to get organized."
- **Support teachers.** Powerful Schools tries to loop everything it does back to the classroom. The after-school classes, for instance, are designed to be entertaining, but also build on concepts introduced during the regular school day. "You can't do that if you're divorced from the school," Tuke explains. Powerful Schools coordinates its offerings with what teachers need "to create great schools. We know that teachers can't do it all on their own. It takes all of us, working together."

Why should these lessons matter to community members who don't happen to have children attending school? Nancy Rawles is a playwright and novelist. Her first novel, *Love Like Gumbo* (Fjord Press) won the 1998 American Book Award and a 1998 Governor's Writers Award for Washington State. She happens to live in the Rainier Valley. She has a two-year-old daughter, too young to be enrolled in school just yet. Rawles has participated in many writer-in-residence programs, but usually with older students. She decided to become involved with Powerful Schools, she says, "because these are my neighborhood kids."

So on a recent autumn afternoon, she was walking around the desks in a fourth-grade classroom, coaxing 10-year-old writers to bring all their senses into their stories. She pulled out images they didn't know they owned: the crunch of popcorn underfoot in a movie house, or the way freshly cut grass smells to a football player who's just been tackled. She showed them how to use these images to make their writing come alive. Through one of her own characters in a play called *The Assassination of Edwin T. Pratt*, Rawles speaks about the importance of collaboration. Pratt, a leader in the fight for equal opportunity, was executive director of Seattle's Urban League during the 1960s. He was gunned down in the doorway of his Seattle home in 1969. In the play, a character speaks these lines:

Doors are opening. Doors are opening but they won't stay open long. All you need to do is get your foot in. All you need to do is get your foot in the door. You get in and then you can open the door for somebody else. Eventually. Eventually, we'll be able to keep the doors open. Eventually, if enough people get in, we'll be able to keep all the doors open all the time.

On the south side of Seattle, doors are opening wide in a most powerful way. ■

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Climbing in the Siskiyous

STEP BY STEP, RURAL RESIDENTS MAKE THEIR WAY TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.

Story and photos by JOYCE RIHA LINIK

WOLF CREEK & SUNNY VALLEY, Oregon—In the Siskiyou Mountains of Southern Oregon where the forested earth folds and crinkles like mounds of green velvet, two small towns are tucked into the creases of neighboring valleys and tied with watery ribbons of cerulean blue. It is easy to see why Wolf Creek and Sunny Valley have appealed to generations of settlers.

Pioneers found that these valleys offered protection from the elements, as well as a plentiful water supply from the nearby Rogue River and its network of feeder creeks. Industrialists were attracted to bountiful woodlands and the promise of gold in surrounding hills. Early entrepreneurs set up service industries along stagecoach routes—an inn or a tavern, a café or a mercantile store.

With the demise of the mining and timber industries, more recent immigrants have been lured by the simple, rustic beauty of the place. A 1969 cover feature in *Life* magazine portrayed the area as a refuge for those in search of peace, love, and living off the land. As a result, an influx of tie-dyed renegades loaded up their VW vans and headed for the hills.

While he missed this flower-child pilgrimage, moving to Wolf Creek some 11 years later, Michael McManus fit right in. At 61, with his graying beard and long, tied-back locks, he looks like a man who embraced the ideals of the '60s. Yet his resume demonstrates that he didn't get waylaid as any campus philosopher. After obtaining a master's degree in psychology from Humboldt State University, McManus worked his way up the ladder of the Eureka, California, school system, first as an English teacher and coach, then as a school counselor, and ultimately as Superintendent. Unfortunately, this climb took McManus further and further away from the job he loved most: working with children.

A decision to get away from it all took him to the Siskiyous, where McManus found both home and heart. He discovered a bucolic landscape in which he and his wife, Camille, could put down roots—literally, through an extensive herb garden—and a *raison d'etre* where his life's work was concerned, for there may have been no place that needed him more.

Josephine County, home to Wolf Creek and Sunny Valley, is Oregon's only federally designated rural Enterprise Community, identified as such because of the severe economic distress of the area. With the Siskiyou National Forest no longer providing a forest-products economy, unemployment is more than double the state average, while per capita income is three-fifths of the average Oregonian's. More than one in two of the county's rural children live in poverty, many in homes without indoor plumbing or electricity. Nine percent of schoolchildren are minorities, primarily Native American and Hispanic. Eighty-six to 98 percent of the community's children qualify for free or reduced-price lunch at school. The statistics go on and on, but suffice to say, Josephine County is in need of many things. Michael McManus, for one.

According to Dr. Steve Nelson, Director of Program and Planning Development at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, McManus understands that rural voices need to be heard and that, often, this involves creating opportunities to get heard. Though he sometimes is described as "quiet," McManus is never shy about picking up a phone to track down a resource or to connect with someone with the power to make things happen. When children are in need, he'll call Head Start's Ron Herndon

or Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber or the President of the United States, if that's what it takes.

"If I had to describe Mike's role," Nelson says, "it's all about kids and all about connections. He sees how all the pieces fit together to benefit children."

KNOWING WHAT CHILDREN NEED

Where children are concerned, McManus has first-hand experience. He and his wife have raised three of their own and are in the process of raising two more, adopted through a foster-parenting program. Some might say that McManus has actually adopted many more since his arrival in Wolf Creek. He has touched the life of nearly every child in the region through his work, first as a child-and-family therapist for Family Friends, a nonprofit organization that treats survivors of child abuse and their families, and more recently as principal of Wolf Creek Elementary School.

"The school is the hub of the community," McManus says, and his statement resonates on a number of levels. Officially, the school serves some 140 students in kindergarten through fifth grade, but

actual students include far greater numbers, ranging in age from birth to senior citizens. That's because the school shares its playground with its next-door neighbor to the west, the Oregon Parent Information and Resource Center, recently opened to provide the community with parenting resources and preschool developmental activities (see sidebar, Page 38). Wolf Creek Elementary also shares some of its facilities with its two neighbors to the east: the Sunny Wolf Family Coalition, a social-service collaborative that includes 26 separate service providers, and the Sunny Wolf Community Response Team (CRT), the organization that controls Enterprise Community funds for community development.

Wolf Creek Elementary is the site for adult evening classes in such subjects as computer software, writing, mushroom tracking, and even belly dancing. And why not? "It is the community's school," McManus asserts.

That's not to say that the focus on grade-school students has gotten fuzzy. McManus is committed, as are staff members at the school, to giving Wolf Creek Elementary students the best possible education. Of course, that involves a strong focus on the basics. To strengthen students' reading skills, for example, McManus notes that every stu-

Reading is a priority for Wolf Creek students.

dent is provided with four separate opportunities to read and improve each day. And the school recently acquired a computer center, equipped with enough terminals to handle a full class at a time, to ensure that Wolf Creek students learn the technological skills they will need when they advance to other schools and eventually enter the workplace.

Before teaching strategies and practices can have an effect, however, children need the kind of support that enables them to absorb the information offered. In impoverished communities like Wolf Creek and Sunny Valley, that means making sure their basic needs are taken care of—things as rudimentary as food and shelter.

"A hungry child is going to have difficulty focusing," McManus notes. Breakfast and lunch are therefore provided.

Some necessities, less tangible, are equally important. "Children need consistency and love," he explains. "They need to know someone cares."

McManus certainly does. He's outside the school each morning to greet children as they arrive; he chats with them at lunchtime in his role as cafeteria facilitator; he's there to see them off on their school buses every afternoon. He bends to their level to talk to them and calls each by name. He makes a point to praise children for their accomplishments and provide encouragement when they need it. Outside of school, he supports them as well, attending after-school events and offering assistance wherever he can. But much of the support these children need comes through community activities—like the parenting center and adult education—that are part of a larger effort to improve results for all.

Children do not live in isolation. They are affected—physically, intellectually, and emotionally—by all those around them. Parents who learn marketable skills have a better chance of finding employment and furthering their ability to provide for their children. Business owners who learn to grow their businesses not only stimulate the community's economy, but also have the potential to provide jobs. Adults who value learning and apply it to better their lives teach children to do the same.

To support each other in this endeavor, the school shares its learning resources with the community while, at the same time, the community shares its learning resources with the school. For instance, the technology center that Wolf Creek Elementary shares with its neighbors wouldn't exist if the neighbors hadn't first donated the building and hardware. If boundaries seem a bit blurred here, it's because they are.

It turns out that McManus is not only the principal of the school; he is also coordinator of the Sunny Wolf Family Coalition and closely linked with the group that shares its house-converted-to-office space, the Sunny Wolf CRT (which, incidentally, is the organization responsible for the donation of the computer center and equipment at the school). Fortunately, Gary O'Neal came on board to head the CRT. Managing all of the Enterprise Community projects is a time-consuming job, and McManus already has two of those.

BEFORE TEACHING STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES CAN HAVE AN EFFECT, CHILDREN NEED THE KIND OF SUPPORT THAT ENABLES THEM TO ABSORB THE INFORMATION OFFERED.

Make that three. In his spare time, McManus is Director of the Oregon Parent Information and Resource Center, the little house on the other side of the school.

"He has a tremendous amount of energy," says Janet Bell, who holds two jobs herself as Office Manager of both the Sunny Wolf Family Coalition and the CRT. "And when

Parents and preschoolers alike enjoy "hanging out" at the Oregon Parent Information and Resource Center. Although the goals of this program are quite serious—providing resources for parents and developing school readiness in preschool youngsters—the methods emphasize fun and informality.

The center, a joint effort of the Sunny Wolf Family Coalition, Portland's Albina Head Start, and the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, is designed to support the community's disproportionately high number of children being raised by single mothers and living below the poverty level. In many cases, residents live miles from their nearest neighbor. As a result, children may have no opportunity to socialize with others their age. Preschoolers may never have been left in the care of another adult. This isolation can be a hindrance to development and a setback once they begin school.

Marion Schneider, the child-development specialist at the parent center, plans activities to help ready young children for the school experience. Some activities involve the parents with their children; others are for children only. Sometimes, the kids just play with toys and with each other, while the parents gather in another room.

"Everything is a learning experience at this age," Schneider says. Putting a toy in the hand of a child, she explains, creates an opportunity for discovery. Through such moments, children learn growth and dexterity, cause and effect. They become familiar with their world. When they play with the other children, they learn to socialize. When they listen to Schneider guide them through a crayon exercise, they prepare to take direction from a teacher.

Wolf Creek Elementary staff have noticed the difference already. Last year, McManus notes, there were a number of new students who arrived at the start of school and really weren't prepared for the experience. This year, kindergarten teacher Linda Blackburn had her first arrivals from Schneider's class. Those who have attended classes at the center, she says, are much more advanced than those who haven't.

Parents advance along with their children. In fact, they may even have more fun. Where it may be a bit traumatic for a child who has been isolated in the country to adjust to a roomful of other children, the parents couldn't be more thrilled to connect with other adults. There's a great deal of talking and laughing whenever they meet. And there's learning, too.

While Schneider is working with the children, McManus meets with the adults for parenting class, although that's a bit of a misnomer. The experience is more of a blend of group therapy and gab session, interspersed with pearls of wisdom from McManus, delivered so skillfully that revelations seem to spring from thin air instead of from any lesson plan.

In one such "class," the conversation is already flowing when McManus mentions a notice he's seen about a group that's seeking out potential foster parents. This turns the conversation to issues that children may have from early childhood experiences and what kinds of parenting are good or bad. What the participants don't seem to realize is that McManus has steered them here to discuss parenting issues in a "safe" forum. While talking about foster children and other people's parenting skills, the participants begin to share their own views and frustrations. They compare experiences. Together, they learn to solve problems.

One recent discussion, for instance, surrounds discipline. Inevitably, the issue of spanking comes up and a debate ensues about whether it's better to spank with a bare hand or with an inanimate object such as a kitchen spoon.

Cindy Henry, a mother in the group, says that instead of spanking, she asks her son if she should tell Mr. McManus about his bad behavior. The group laughs.

Henry explains. It's not that the child is afraid of McManus, a self-described "marshmallow," but that he respects his principal and knows that his principal respects him. He doesn't want his image tarnished in McManus' eyes.

This gives McManus the perfect opportunity to talk about alternatives to spanking, specifically the "assertive discipline" he and his staff use at the school. He doesn't get preachy on them. After all, he says, there's no parent—including himself—who doesn't have room to grow. He doesn't get technical on them. But he does give the parents an idea of how assertive discipline works, noting that it involves building mutual trust and respect with a child, and it rewards positive behavior.

If, however, children behave badly, McManus suggests that parents identify the action, inform them of the result that will occur if they continue to engage in the behavior, and give them a choice. He also plants the suggestion that they go sit in on Maureen Hutcheson's first-grade class to get an idea of how assertive discipline works.

The conversation segues into another discussion and eventually ends when some of the preschoolers come looking for their mommies. Later, when one of those mommies is asked about parenting classes, she says there aren't any. "Oh, sometimes we get together and talk," she concedes, "but there aren't any classes." ■

something needs to be done, he never shrinks from taking the hardest part of the project."

It's convenient, then, that these organizations are linked geographically, though McManus is personally wearing a path between the buildings. Their location also reinforces the strong ideological link between school and community development.

They're all working toward improving life for the community as a whole—children and adults. Working with the child involves working with the parent. Working with the parent affects the child. And education—or learning, a less daunting term for some—is a key ingredient in these seamless efforts.

ONE BIG CLASSROOM

In many ways, the Wolf Creek/Sunny Valley region itself is one big classroom.

Community members like Tom Greene and David Storey look forward to their day as schoolteachers every year. Volunteer firefighters from the town, these men visit during Fire Prevention Week. Throughout the day, groups of students gather in the cafeteria to learn about "the great escape," mapping a route out of a burning building in advance in case the need ever arises.

The students are rapt. For children anywhere, firefighters and fire trucks are exciting stuff.

Greene draws pictures of a burning house on the chalkboard. "You'll want to look for the nearest window," he instructs.

"But what if you don't have a window?" asks a child. The question is a reminder that many of the community's children live in makeshift dwellings that may not have windows or even doors. Some families resort to tents and cars when times are rough.

Without missing a beat, Greene broadens his response to exits of any kind.

When the lesson has ended, the children can barely contain themselves as they are guided outside to get a closer look at the gleaming white fire and rescue trucks. The firefighters even manage to work a bit of math into their presentation while showing the children the truck's water gauge. Storey says they tailor the lesson for different grade levels.

When Maureen Hutcheson's first-grade students are back in their classroom, she gathers the children in a semicircle around her and asks them to summarize lessons learned. Hands shoot up so quickly, small bodies are almost propelled into the air. It appears the firefighters have met with teaching success. At the least, "Stop, drop,

and roll," is firmly engrained in students' minds.

The community also serves as classroom when the students venture out. A lesson for area students has to do with the nature of wetlands and how to restore them in an area decimated by mining over the last century-and-a-half. The Golden Coyote Wetlands reclamation effort has received the financial backing of the Southwest Oregon Resource Conservation and Development Council, among others. The project was the dream-child of local resident Jack Smith who, remembering waterways once thick with steelhead and salmon, was inspired to restore the area to its former bounty. Students have been involved in helping to survey and inventory the land, and to clear intrusive, nonnative plants.

> WORKING WITH THE CHILD INVOLVES WORKING WITH THE PARENT. WORKING WITH THE PARENT AFFECTS THE CHILD, AND EDUCATION—OR LEARNING, A LESS DAUNTING TERM FOR SOME—IS A KEY INGREDIENT IN THESE SEAMLESS EFFORTS.

As the project progresses, students will use the site to study both wildlife and history. Eleanor Pugh, an avid ornithologist who has catalogued local bird populations, has already begun to educate the area's children and adults on the complex world of wetlands species. Increased numbers of deer, beaver, and turtles are also anticipated. And history buffs need only cross the creek to find Golden, an abandoned gold-rush era mining town that is remarkably well preserved.

ONE-STOP SHOPPING

Wolf Creek is located 20 miles and two mountain passes away from Grants Pass, the nearest city. Lack of transportation makes it hard for many residents to access state or county service providers. "So," McManus explains, "we said, 'Come to us. We'll give you the space to provide your services.'"

The truth is, they didn't have a space waiting. But McManus and others were adamant about getting the services out to the people. If service providers would come, they would find a space.

Service providers came: representatives from federal, state, and local organizations; designees from public and private foundations. They came to provide welfare and employment resources, health services and counseling, firewood permits and driver licenses. They met in a back room loaned by the local church and set up shop. Because there was no heat in the church's annex and winter in the Siskiyous can get really cold, McManus would come early to start a fire in the wood-burning stove. This image of McManus lighting fires has stuck. Now, the community says he lights fires wherever he goes.

Sid Jack, from the Oregon Employment Department office in Grants Pass, was one of the early members of the Sunny Wolf Family Coalition. He remembers the first community meeting he attended in 1995 when he looked around the group assembled in the church annex and saw more service providers in attendance than local residents. Having worked with many communities over the years, he thought, "Here goes another round of we-know-what's-good-for-you." But the Sunny/Wolf community surprised him. The word may have been slow to spread in the beginning, but now, Jack says, "there are more locals than providers at the meetings," even though the list of providers has grown. What's more, turf battles are nonexistent, he says. "There's a real spirit of we-can-do-it."

Further, Jack says he finds the coalition to be "the most cooperative group [he's] ever worked with."

The folks in Wolf Creek are much more concerned about getting the work done than worrying about who gets credit. "There is less turf battle," he says, than he's seen in other places. "In fact, it's non-existent."

With the approval of clients, service providers collaborate to find the best ways to help people in need. These sessions are called "staffings" and they are highly confidential to respect the privacy of those involved. One case involved a couple with four children, living in two cars and a tent. Representatives from several service providers—including Adult and Family Services, the Josephine County Housing and Community Development Council, Services to Children and Families, and the Oregon Employment Department —got together to find fast solutions. They met with the couple on a Wednesday. By the following Monday, service providers had come up with available housing as well as job referrals. Had these services not been available in one location, the family might still be driving back and forth between agencies located in different parts of the state and waiting in lines to see caseworkers who would only be able to help with one piece of the puzzle. And that's assuming one of their cars was functional.

This collaborative approach is rewarding to the service providers, as well as the clients. Instead of sitting in an office seeing an endless stream of cases, they get to know their clients personally in their own environment, which helps them to better understand clients' needs. And they get to see when they've made a difference. "It's extremely refreshing," says Jack.

SETTING A POWERFUL EXAMPLE

When community efforts help adults, they also help children —not just by providing life's necessities, but also by providing opportunities that can make the difference between a child merely surviving or learning to lead a productive, rewarding life. "It's not just the physical support that's important," says resident Ron Murray. He'd be the first to tell others not to underestimate the power of a good example.

Ten years ago, after his stint with the U.S. Army ended, Murray and his daughter, Hannah, moved to Wolf Creek. When he found no employment in the area, he got resourceful. A good mechanic, Murray thought he could make a go at a business of his own. Unfortunately, his repair shop met with a catch-22: Many residents in this poor community can't afford cars. Murray's attempt at a landscaping business also failed. With a child to support and nowhere else to turn, he found himself on welfare and fighting serious depression.

Murray's involvement with the folks at the Sunny Wolf Family Coalition and the CRT helped him regain his footing, slowly but surely. First, Murray took advantage of service providers' offers to help him with his depression and a worsening alcohol problem. Then, Murray says, "I finally decided it was time to do something for myself." He took hold of his bootstraps and gave a good tug.

One of the vision statements adopted by the residents of Sunny Valley and Wolf Creek was a commitment to taking part in the development of the community, even—and, in fact, especially —on a volunteer basis. Murray took this tenet to heart. He began volunteering at the Sunny Wolf program office and, in the process, learned about a temporary employment program offered by the Job Council. He approached CRT head O'Neal with a proposal, and the CRT agreed. Through the program, Murray would spend six months working for the CRT; the state would pay most of Murray's salary; and the CRT would provide job training. Because Murray demonstrated some skill and interest in writing, folks at the CRT

A second-grade boy tackles a math project

helped enroll him in a business-English program offered by Rogue River Community College. At the end of the six-month period, the Sunny Wolf staff was impressed. So was the community, which votes on the allocation of all CRT development funds. In this case, they voted to hire Murray full time to work in the CRT office.

Of this experience, Murray says, "It feels good to be productive, to be a plus to the community, to earn respect." He loves his job and the people he works with, both the staffers and the clients for whom he has special empathy. "Now, I rush to get out the door in the morning instead of trying to hide behind it."

The effect on Murray's daughter is also evident. While she had always been a good student, her grades clouded during the worst of the storm. Now, besides providing his daughter with the basics, Murray can provide a positive role model. "It's really brought up her self-esteem," he says. "Seeing her father working and getting paid on a regular basis, that's been really good for her." Hannah's grades have risen to straight As, and she's taken more interest in extracurricular activities. At after-school events, Murray has noticed that she holds her head a little higher. It's clear that she is proud of her father.

Likewise, her father is proud of her. This summer, Hannah participated in another community development program organized through the Sunny Wolf Family Coalition. Through a youth employment program from The Job Council, the teen had the opportunity to work as a teacher's aide at the Oregon Parent Information and Resource Center, learn a bit about early-childhood development, and earn some pocket money of her own. This community-as-classroom experience, her father says, has opened new options for her future. Hannah is currently investigating child care and teaching as possible career goals.

Other teens took advantage of similar learning opportunities in the community.

Several found summer jobs on the Golden Coyote Wetlands project, reclaiming local waterways.

Another group found summer work on a project organized by the CRT, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and local community member Boyd Peters. In an effort to improve tourism in the area, this group cleared a hiking trail to the top of London Peak (named after Jack London who did some writing here around the turn of the century). The London Peak Trail is particularly significant because it is a wheelchair-access trail, which enables the disabled to enjoy the views usually seen only by the able-bodied.

Opportunities like these provide much-needed income for families. At the same time, they offer job training and teach valuable life skills. Further, they keep teens and young adults engaged in productive activities instead of partaking in a favorite pastime for some Wolf Creek residents: hanging out and drinking in front of a boarded-up store.

REDUCING THE RISKS

In Wolf Creek, teenagers are at particular risk of falling out of the education system and mainstream society. Because there is no middle school or high school in the valley, Sunny Wolf teens are bused to Merlin, a town on the outskirts of Grants Pass. Getting there means catching the bus at 6:20 a.m. This can take a physical toll on adolescents, whose developing bodies often need extra sleep.

Adolescence is also the first time that many of the "have nots" meet the "haves" from wealthier communities. The emotional toll can be significant. The Boys and Girls Club, a member of the Sunny Wolf Family Coalition, tries to catch kids before they fall.

National statistics show that most juvenile delinquency happens in the first hour after school. Bored kids, released from school while many adults are still working, will find something to do. In an effort to make that "something" constructive instead of destructive, the Boys and Girls Club offers Power Hour, a one-hour after-school program that provides homework help and promotes basic-skills development, including computer practice. Children of all ages are welcome, and older students often help tutor the younger ones.

Additionally, the club offers evening and weekend activities, including field trips filled with experiences many of these children might not otherwise enjoy: bowling in Grants Pass, eating pizza, seeing a movie, going ice skating, or taking a climbing class. Though the lack-of-transportation issue made these trips rare at the start, that's no longer the case.

The Fraternal Order of the Eagles lodge in Grants Pass raised the money to buy the club a van and also organized a used bicycle drive. Repairing the bikes is a new club project, and another way to

teach the children about responsibility and ownership, explains Dave Plautz, coordinator of Boys and Girls Club activities in Wolf Creek. With more of the world within reach, there's no doubt that these children will travel farther in life.

Wolf Creek residents Eileen Zink and Bev Strauser saw further options for teens in a junk-filled garage behind the house that's headquarters for Sunny Wolf programs. Zink's grandmother, it seems, was fond of the adage "Idle hands are the devil's workshop." Zink was reminded of this as she heard tale after tale of bored children getting into mischief. She and Strauser decided that the Sunny Wolf garage was just what teens needed. The two women offered to coordinate a community effort to clean out the junk and turn the garage into a meeting place for teens.

Not only did the CRT agree to the proposal, they found funds to do some of the finish work—putting in drywall and adding a bathroom and kitchenette. The teens themselves participated in the painting and decorating of their new home and couldn't be happier with the results. They've even included a bathroom wall of inspirational graffiti.

Additionally, Zink and Strauser were instrumental in equipping the teens' garage with vehicles for education and entertainment: computer terminals and software, video games and pool tables, chess sets and decks of cards. Many items were donated by people or organizations who supported the idea of the Wolf Creek Teen Center.

Adult volunteers see that the drug-, alcohol-, and smoke-free policy is strictly enforced, and distribute healthy snacks that have been provided through donations. The real measure of success: Whenever the doors are open, teens hang "out" inside.

GAINING GROUND

Those without children at home have also benefited from the school-and-community efforts. Many have given something back. As part of a dance and theater troupe called *Those Wolf Creek People*, Laurie Robertson and two fellow artists received a Commission on Children and Families grant allocated by the Boys and Girls Club to provide dance workshops at the school. For children who may not even have a television set at home, *Those Wolf Creek People* were a real hit. The group continues to organize theater productions in which community members take the stage.

Robertson was also one of the first adults to take advantage of the computer classes offered after hours at Wolf Creek Elementary. The skills she acquired there enabled her to generate computer spreadsheets for her husband Ronald's truck-driving business, which allows him to spend more time on the job generating profits which, in turn, help to stimulate the local economy.

And the Robertsons aren't the only small-business owners who have benefited. The CRT has used a portion of Enterprise Community funds to offer low-interest loans to small business owners who can't obtain traditional bank financing.

According to the CRT's O'Neal, "We're like the old-fashioned banker who knows people and their reputation." And the strategy is working. Thus far, the effort has funded nine small business loans to community members, and timely payments are rolling in. Some of the businesses have even created new jobs in the community.

Last year, the CRT itself started a small business to generate income for the years ahead, when Enterprise Community funds are no longer available. The business involves shipping specialty fencing (designed to keep out deer) from a family-owned company in Pennsylvania to customers in the western United States. Already, the business has expanded into its own warehouse.

Indeed, the combined efforts of both school and community in Wolf Creek and Sunny Valley are gaining ground.

Inch by inch, step by step, residents are beginning to make real strides toward improving the health of their community. There's still a long, uphill climb before economic stability is attained and the community is able to support itself. But, as McManus attests, "This is a real 'can-do' community." And folks in these parts have a great deal of experience climbing mountains. ■

COMMUNITIES THAT CARE

PERSONABLE APPROACH TO PROBLEM-SOLVING BRINGS A WARM, SMALL-TOWN FEELING TO URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS.

BY CATHERINE PAGLIN

ILLUSTRATION: CHRISTOPHER STINE

PORTLAND, Oregon—Vicky Martell works behind the scenes—in outer northeast Portland, just off one of the city's rawest commercial thoroughfares, on a mostly deserted second floor above a red brick vocational high school, at the end of a hallway piled with boxes.

Here Martell plies her trade as a community organizer. She doesn't grab headlines, rouse rabble, file lawsuits, or call press conferences. Hers is the unsung task of oiling social service machinery—improving programs by connecting people to other people, information, ideas, and opportunities.

Martell coordinates one of Multnomah County's eight Caring Communities. These collaborative programs are all dedicated to a goal of 100 percent high school completion. Funded in part by the county, with matching dollars from a variety of other public programs and private supporters, Caring Communities involve participants from social service agencies and schools, as well as neighbors who have energy to share.

"We're not necessarily about creating more programs. We want to make existing programs better through service integration and collaboration," says Martell, an energetic 28-year-old. Through discussion and information-sharing, Caring Community members form "action teams" around issues—mentoring, healthy activities for youth during

nonschool times, violence prevention, truancy—that are directly or indirectly linked to a child's ability to finish high school and begin work or further education.

The Caring Communities are loosely based on high school attendance areas. Martell's territory—Grant/Madison—takes in 11,000 students in two Portland high schools, four middle schools, and 12 elementary schools. It stretches from the inner city out east to the 82nd Avenue commercial strip; from the industrial area at the north to leafy Laurelhurst at the south. Its residents live in stately homes along the sweeping curves of Alameda Ridge, in unheated campers on Northeast Killingsworth, and everywhere in between.

"I feel like by developing Caring Communities around high school attendance areas we're trying to recreate what already exists in small towns. We are trying to get back that small-town feeling," says Martell, who speaks wistfully of the previous summer she spent working in eastern Oregon.

Faces of people she met at a recent church social adorn her office wall. There's smiling, white-haired Eunice who likes to cook and bake and wants to learn quilting. There's A.J., a slim teenage boy who's good at basketball and interested in history. There's beefy, bearded, T-shirt-wearing Dale—proud father, and satisfied customer of the local convenience store—curly forelock falling from his otherwise shaved head. He's flanked by two beaming little girls holding potted flowers.

"I talked to 40 neighbors, all ages and all races," says Martell. She and staff from Lutheran Family Services also photographed these folks, surveyed them, and gave each a plant donated by a local nursery. The joint effort, which has been repeated in other neighborhoods, is called "Community Snapshots."

BUILDING A BASE

Getting out into the community helps Martell build a base of neighbors. Researchers would call what she does "creating a community asset map." To Martell, it just makes good sense. "What this does for me is I know that Eunice is good at cooking and baking, so if we ever have an activity involving cooking and baking we could call Eunice," she says.

Just such a conjunction in Martell's mental database (she keeps an electronic one as well) resulted in one of her most successful community-building efforts to date.

At one of many meetings that fill her calendar, she crossed paths with former Portland School Board member Bill Scott, now Oregon Economic Development Director. Scott lives and works elsewhere, but attends church in Portland's Irvington neighborhood in the Grant High School attendance area.

"He came over and handed me his card with his home number on it and said: 'I'm interested in my church becoming connected to your Caring Community. I'm interested in doing something with my church,'" says Martell.

She tucked the card away. Six months later a member of another church—a former teacher—approached her for the same reason. Martell asked if that church, also in the Irvington neighborhood, would like to host a lunch for neighborhood pastors. Representatives from five churches, including Scott's and the former teacher's, came to the meeting Martell dubbed "Pizza with the Pastors."

"It's a delightful idea," says Portland Public Schools' Pat Burk, Assistant to the Superintendent. "It takes a really creative person to take a simple idea and snowball it."

Snowball it did. Out of the lunch meetings grew Faith in Youth, an action team that now has 15 core members. In September, the group organized a Back to School Fair attended by more than 650 students from more than nine schools. Organizers and sponsors checked kids for head lice and lead poisoning, sold low-priced bicycle helmets, dispensed immunizations, and gave away school supplies and alarm clocks to help students get back to school on time and prepared to learn. A Grant High School student and teacher organized a talent show.

After its efforts to get the year off to a good start, Faith in Youth is looking for ongoing ways churches can support schools and families in the Grant area. "This was seen as the first action of a long-term partnership. It wasn't a one-shot deal," says Mark Knutsen, pastor of Augustana Lutheran Church. One idea is for churches to provide activities for children on teacher inservice and planning days. Another is to help parents navigate through the annual flood of program flyers to plan their children's summer schedule.

Martell quietly supports Faith in Youth by helping the meeting facilitator draw up the agenda, taking minutes, and lining up just the right outside person to attend a particular meeting. "I try to make it easy for them to be the visionary people," she says. She also makes sure that the good feelings and intentions generated at meetings don't evaporate from lack of follow through, says Knutsen.

MAKING THE CONNECTION

When the Caring Communities began forming in 1991, the schoolhouse doors did not immediately swing open. "Sometimes the hardest thing was to engage school people or to have them understand that it was good for the community to be involved," says Maxine Thompson, coordinator of The Leaders Roundtable, an ad hoc group of county leaders from business, education, government, and the nonprofit sector. The Leaders Roundtable started the Caring Communities as part of its effort to help poor and minority youth succeed in school and society.

But that early resistance seems to be giving way. Thompson explains, "As the schools lost resources [to budget cuts], they began to see the Caring Communities as a vehicle to bring resources back into the schools."

The Caring Community coordinators enable school principals to reach out into the community and become more involved, Burk says, explaining why the program appeals to the district.

James Brannon, Principal of Whitaker Middle School, sees the Caring Community performing dual roles: outreach arm and funnel for resources.

"Vicky [Martell] seems to have her hands in just about everything that could help the school," says Brannon. "I rely on her to keep me apprised of discussions around the city. She's a very valuable resource." He also praises the Caring Community's role in making the school's new Family Resource Center a reality: "They've been at the table since the planning began," he says. "I remember when this was just a thought."

Opening Whitaker's Family Resource Center in 1998 after three years of planning is one of the Grant/Madison Caring Community's most tangible achievements. The center is a collaborative partnership between the county's departments of Health and of Community and Family Services, Whitaker's administrators and counselors, the state's Adult and Family Services, and Portland Parks and Recreation, among others. It offers health, education, and social services to children and families, all in one convenient location, with the school at the center of the service hub.

Establishing family resource centers was a first accomplishment for many of the Caring Communities. Each collaborative, however, has its own particular emphases. East County Caring Community, for instance, which takes in three entire school districts, focuses heavily on early childhood intervention.

"By the time a child is truant and hanging out in Pioneer Square [a popular gathering place in downtown Portland], you have your work cut out for you," says Lorena Campbell, East County Caring Community Director. "We chose a long-range focus of providing the services to young children and their families that would allow them to be successful and maintain success, rather than remedial programs."

PHOTO BY CATHERINE FAOLIN

AT NEIGHBORHOOD FORUMS AND CHURCH SOCIALS, VICKY MARTELL TAKES THE PULSE OF HER COMMUNITY. SHE'S LISTENING FOR THE ISSUES THAT BUBBLE UP.

Through the East County Caring Community, Head Start, the county health department, the school districts, and others cooperate to put on an annual developmental screening for children ages birth through five.

"The money it saves in staff and planning time is really significant," says Campbell. "What we really do is give the widest range of services for the least amount of money. No one has to dip into extra pots." This year more than 300 children were screened. Parents have to fill out only one set of forms to have children checked for immunizations, hearing, speech, fine and gross motor development, vision, and anemia. Through the screening, Head Start identifies younger children most in need of its program. Other agencies in the Caring Community's early childhood action team locate older children who need early intervention so they can start kindergarten ready to learn.

After the screening, the service providers in the early childhood action team go over the files to make sure they follow up on problems. The agencies either provide the assistance or, with parents' permission, notify the school. "We never just hand the parents information and say, 'See ya,'" says Campbell.

The Caring Communities are by nature low profile. They try to support the efforts of other groups and help them work together, not compete with them for funding or recognition. For instance, nowhere

in the publicity or press coverage of the Back to School Fair was the Grant/Madison Caring Community mentioned. "I think you are most effective when you say, 'Who cares who gets the credit? Let's just get it done,'" says Martell.

The devotion to work rather than glory has its downside. "We struggle to try to point people in the direction of the Caring Communities as a place to go when you want to do work with schools," says Thompson. Well-established networks like the Caring Communities sometimes get bypassed in a political world where elected officials prefer to start their own initiatives. "There may be less interest in supporting something that somebody else started," says Thompson.

External forces are not the only challenge. When there is staff or steering committee turnover, Caring Communities risk losing their sense of direction and institutional memory. Conflicts in leadership style can arise between the coordinator and the chair of the steering committee. Sometimes a person comes to the group with an agenda and drops out when the group or coordinator does not want to take on a particular project.

Yet those in the know sing the praises of this deliberately low-key approach. "None of us can operate in isolation," says Chris Bekemeier of Lutheran Family Services. "The Caring Community provides a link so we're doing things together on a local level."

"The Caring Communities are an incredible bargain," says Burk. "The coordinators are some of the most hard-working people. They work on a shoe string, put in very long hours, and do tremendous work."

MEETINGS AND MORE

On a recent Thursday, Martell's long hours begin when she arrives at 7:15 a.m. at a high-rise near downtown for a Caring Community Steering Committee meeting. This is a group that oversees all eight of the Caring Communities. Despite the early hour and lack of coffee and donuts, the conference room is packed. It's the first meeting after the summer break. All the big agencies and supporters of the Caring Communities are there—from city, county, school districts—61 people to discuss a new county truancy initiative.

When the meeting ends at 8:45 a.m., Martell jumps in her brown 1986 Jetta and drives five miles to Whitaker Middle School for another meeting at the Family Resource Center. She comes bearing gifts from the first meeting—in addition to a promising resume there's information about an immunization clinic, a reading program in an area with a population like Whitaker's, and a head lice resource center. "I get the information and give it out right away," she says.

Four families are on the agenda. Their problems include difficulty securing eligibility for Aid to Dependent Children, poor school attendance, and fighting at school. Martell, the Family Resource Center coordinator, a welfare worker, a state protective services worker, and representatives from the Police Activities League, a housing agency, and the city's parks and recreation department zero in on ways to help these families solve the complex problems that may not have simple solutions.

It's at meetings like this one and church socials and neighborhood forums that Martell takes the community pulse. "I listen for the issues that bubble up," she says. Lately she's hearing about head lice, grandparents doing parenting, truancy, and a lack of recreational facilities in the Madison area.

From Whitaker, Martell heads back toward the center of town to St. Philip the Deacon Episcopal Church on a quiet neighborhood corner. A lunch meeting with Faith in Youth begins with a prayer. The group reviews the Back to School Fair, noting how it can be improved next year, and follows with a rich discussion of ways they can keep focused on building community, beyond hosting events.

In the afternoon Martell is back at her office at the far edge of the Grant/Madison area, typing up the meeting notes and sending them out, answering the eight phone calls on her voice mail, most of them requests for information.

During a week filled with meetings, phone calls, and paperwork, Martell recharges with some hands-on volunteer work. "Otherwise I'll go crazy," she says. Fluent in Spanish, she mentors a nine-year-old Spanish-speaking girl who is unsure of her English but was told at a previous school that it was bad to speak her own language. "We speak a lot of *Spanglish*," says Martell.

"Are the Caring Communities making a difference?" asks Thompson. She wants to know and she's pushed for an evaluation, anticipating it will bring about learning and improvement. She's aware it will have limitations. "The factors that influence kids staying in school are so complex," she says, "that it is very difficult to point to any one thing that happened. And because the Caring Communities are more catalysts and facilitators —bringing people to the table—and less

See COMMUNITIES, Page 52

If a school-community partnership sounds like a good idea for your neighborhood, how do you move from idea to action? What program model would work best in your community? The following publications walk readers through the steps involved in getting a collaboration up and running.

IS YOUR COMMUNITY A GLASS HALF FULL, OR HALF EMPTY? In *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets* (Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Northwestern University, 1993), authors John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight share their optimistic bias. Every community, they assert, is a place filled with talents and gifts. You just have to know where to look to find your community's strengths.

The authors focus primarily on developing the local capacity in urban areas, particularly in inner cities where middle-income manufacturing jobs have been lost in recent decades. If local residents are lacking education and job skills, they may feel powerless, the authors acknowledge. Kretzmann and McKnight illustrate how change is possible if residents are willing to join in the struggle to rebuild "from the inside out." Local residents, local associations, and local institutions are the foundations for building lasting change.

Kretzmann and McKnight use an accessible style to explain research-based concepts about community building. They show why a more traditional approach has left many poor communities feeling "needy," with residents typically reduced to the status of clients awaiting services from outside experts. They make a convincing case for why this approach has led to fragmented

services and a lack of connection at the local level. Rather than looking at a community in terms of its needs, they suggest focusing on local assets: What are the strengths of a place? How can we tap these assets, and build on them, to improve the community? The authors show how to "map" local assets, how to build on existing relationships, and how to release the power of individuals, associations, and organizations to become more active contributors to the life of the community.

The authors go into detail to suggest ways to "release the power" of local associations and organizations. Together with individuals, associations are the basic community-building tools of local neighborhoods. In low-income neighborhoods, however, residents and outsiders often make the mistake of assuming that associations are scarce. Kretzmann and McKnight offer evidence that suggests even the poorest communities are rich in associations. They describe a lower-income Chicago neighborhood where researchers found more than 150 local associations, ranging from service clubs to merchant groups to neighborhood choirs. How to find existing associations and enlist their support for community building? This workbook outlines an inexpensive and quick research approach: using printed sources (such as newspapers); talking to people at local institutions; and conducting a telephone survey.

The real strength of this book may lie in the hundreds of examples of collaboration sprinkled across the pages: the inner-city church that "adopts" a public school, providing literacy tutoring to students; the artists who work with disabled persons to create a community mural; the elementary school students who collect oral histories from seniors living in a public housing project; the police officers who teach conflict resolution skills to at-risk teens. Those seeking inspiration will discover a wealth of ideas that have worked to rebuild and revive other communities, both large and small.

Building Communities from the Inside Out ($20) is one of several community-building tools available from ACTA Publications, 4848 North Clark Street, Chicago, IL 60640.

WHY DO SOME COLLABORATIONS SUCCEED, while others fizzle? *Collaboration: What Makes It Work, A Review of Research Literature on Factors Influencing Successful Collaboration* (Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 1992) sifts through the research to deliver some practical information.

This report, written by Paul W. Mattessich and Barbara R. Monsey, begins with a working definition of collaboration: "a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals." Then, the authors identify and discuss 19 keys to success in collaborations formed by human service, government, and other nonprofit agencies.

For example, they explain why it's important for members of a collaborative group to feel "ownership" of both the way the group works and the results or product of the work. They look at the factors related to communication, such as how often members communicate and how well information flows. They explain the wisdom of partners investing time to get better acquainted.

The authors also discuss how to use these 19 factors at different

stages along the way to building a successful collaboration. During the planning stages, the factors provide a checklist. Is your collaboration building in the factors that will breed success? Can planning steps be taken to improve? Once a collaborative effort is underway, the factors can be useful for making midcourse changes or adjustments.

Collaboration: What Makes It Work costs $14 and can be ordered from Amherst H. Wilder Foundation Publishing Center, 919 Lafond Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55104, or by phone, 1-800-274-6024.

WHAT WILL OUR RURAL COMMUNITY LOOK LIKE IN FIVE YEARS? That's a question that citizens in small towns all across the country are asking one another. *Finding Their Own Place* (ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools, 1997), by Bruce A. Miller and Karen J. Hahn, suggests that it might be wise to ask the same question of young rural people.

Finding Their Own Place describes the experiences of three small towns in the Northwest—Broadus and Saco, Montana, and Methow Valley, Washington. All three operate successful school-to-work programs that involve youth in the life of their communities. Their stories challenge the notion that rural youth lack opportunities for meaningful learning experiences close to home. They also illustrate how the energy and vitality of young people can advance community development.

The case studies describe economic hardships that many rural communities face, yet also celebrate the innovation of people at home in remote and isolated places. In Saco, Montana, for instance, a community of about 250 people, children in grades K-12 routinely use an electronic network, and teachers tap resources via satellite downlink.

As the authors report, "some rural communities have turned the seemingly impossible into success stories for youth and their communities. They have capitalized on their local strengths—small size, sense of community, pride of place."

The book costs $12 and can be ordered by phone, 1-800-624-9120.

POWERFUL SCHOOLS, A COLLABORATIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM serving a low-income Seattle neighborhood, has an established track record as a model that works to uplift student achievement and strengthen bonds between community and school (see Page 24). *Powerful Schools Handbook: Starting and Running a Collaborative School Improvement Program* (Court Street Press, 1995) shares the nuts and bolts of how this program really functions. The workbook outlines every step, from getting a project off the ground to finding a steady flow of funds and sufficient number of volunteers to keep it running smoothly.

Specific programs are described in detail, such as one-on-one mentoring, community schools, and parent involvement programs. Written by staff and volunteers from Powerful Schools, the contents mix longer, how-to articles with short tips and specific suggestions.

In the spirit of sharing, the book concludes with examples of forms and brochures that can easily be adapted to fit other programs. These examples take the guesswork out of designing an evaluation form, a job description, or a brochure to recruit volunteers.

Powerful Schools Handbook can be ordered for $19.95 plus $2 for handling from Powerful Schools, 3301 S. Horton Street, Seattle, WA 98144.

RURAL EDUCATION SPECIALISTS FROM THE NORTHWEST LABORATORY have been engaged in a long-term project to develop the local capacity in five pilot sites across the Northwest. The lessons learned in these real-world applications are highlighted in a series of workbooks, *Strengthening Community Education: The Basis for Sustainable Community Renewal*. The first two books in a series of four are now available.

Building Partnerships Workbook by Diane Dorfman (NWREL, 1998) is a hands-on guide to launching a collaborative community development project. The book introduces basic concepts about communities, focusing indepth on the importance of relationships within a geographic setting. The interactive approach engages readers to list their own relationships and examine which bonds forge a sense of community.

Dorfman applies community-building concepts specifically to rural places, pointing out the challenges, but also the strengths, of rural communities. She stresses the significance of the school in rural locales to explain why school-community collaborations benefit all ages.

This is a book intended to be *used*. The pages invite readers to write down their thoughts. The concepts lead naturally to conversations between friends and neighbors. And through lively, focused dialogue, the book explains, the real work of building community takes place.

Mapping Community Assets Workbook by Diane Dorfman (NWREL, 1998) takes readers step-by-step through the process of identifying strengths in their communities. The book begins on a personal level, asking readers to list their own assets—not only tangible goods, but also the relationships that enhance their lives. Then, the lens opens up to take stock of the assets of the community, with whatever is most *special* about the place at the center of the "asset map." Readers learn how to design a questionnaire to find the assets scattered throughout their community and bring them into the open, for everyone's benefit.

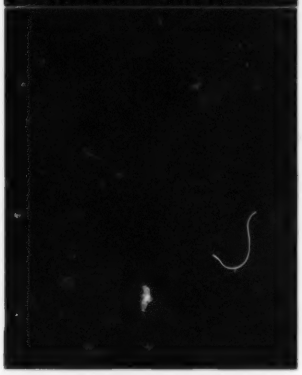
Copies of the workbooks are available from NWREL, (503) 275-9498 or 1-800-547-6339, ext. 498. *Building Partnerships* costs $12.80, *Mapping Community Assets* costs $10.30.

—Suzie Boss

INVESTING IN PEOPLE

Financial aid is just the start.

BY CHARLES P. WALKER



The Ford Scholars Program and the Ford Opportunity Program for Single Parents are different from most other college scholarship programs.

They differ because the late Kenneth Ford, founder of Roseburg Forest Products, developed a clear idea of what he wanted his program to be, who it should serve, and why; and later Hallie Ford did the same with the scholarship program she founded for single parents. As a staff member of the Ford Family Foundation and, eventually, director of both scholarship programs, I had the thrill of listening to the Fords express their hopes and ideas. It took months, with numerous drafts and revisions, before each program was ready to launch. Kenneth Ford once remarked, "We want to help those who other programs may not want." Hallie Ford said she wanted to focus on "this very special group of people that has more hurdles to jump than most if they are to complete college."

The Ford Scholars Program, now in its fifth year, has selected 443 Oregonians ranging in age from 17 to 51. The Opportunity Program, in its third year, has selected 90 recipients from age 17 to 46. The Ford Family Foundation provides these students, studying in 33 different Oregon institutions, with 90 percent of their unmet financial need (after other sources of support are deducted). Support is limited to 90 percent because both founders felt "providing free rides" was a bad thing, and wanted each person to contribute a part of his or her educational costs.

These programs differ from most others because of the amount of interest taken in the scholars and the partnerships developed with other individuals and organizations.

The interest taken in each recipient is quite unusual. It begins with the selection process, which requires all finalists to be interviewed by a team of three or four qualified persons.

At an annual luncheon for each program, each recipient is invited to attend with two guests. At each table is a host who is a Ford family member, director, staff person of the foundation, or someone knowledgeable about the program.

In the fall, each Ford Scholar receives a several-page letter from the director. Along with basic program information, it includes topics such as "managing 24 hours in one's day," "being sure to think for oneself rather than just following the crowd," or, "controlling procrastination." Similar letters are sent in the winter and spring. For the smaller group of Opportunity Program people, personal contacts are made through periodic phone calls rather than letters. In each case, regular communication during the academic year is encouraged.

Academic grades are reviewed at the end of each term. Those who might be struggling receive a phone call or letter of support and encouragement. If more attention seems needed, the director will maintain weekly personal contact with the scholar.

Each summer, a separate weekend conference is held at an Oregon resort for each class of Ford Scholars. Ford family members, directors, and staff also attend. Each conference has a theme and makes use of outside presenters. The freshman class conference focuses on "Building Leadership through Relationships." For sophomores, it's "Taking Initiative in Solving Problems." The conferences are intended to provide group learning experiences for each class, and to help students sense that they are part of a very special and permanent group. It is now evident that most scholars do feel they belong to a special group. They regularly write saying how important the human elements of the program are to them. One recent graduate put it this way: "When I started I knew the financial help was critical, but it was not till I had read several of the on-target letters and attended my first conference that I realized this was more than money —it was and is about people who didn't even know me, caring about me and my success and showing it so beautifully."

Each class is provided with a handbook, phone numbers they can use to connect with the people administering the program, and e-mail addresses for all scholars so they can easily contact each other.

When Ford Scholars complete their baccalaureate degrees, they choose either a Ford Scholar ring or lapel pin, and become members of the alumni association. The activities of the alumni are currently being developed, but it is clear that there will be a newsletter, periodic gatherings, and opportunities for those who are interested to participate in the interview process for new scholars, speak at awards luncheons, and connect with beginning Ford Scholars. Data on each graduate is being maintained, so that longitudinal studies can be carried out.

Finally, a recent decision makes it possible for those with outstanding undergraduate records to apply for up to a two-year extension to do graduate work.

While there is still room to strengthen these programs, evi-

dence documents their effective functioning. Such a positive statement can be made primarily because of the formal and informal partnerships that have developed. These include:

- Voluntary giving of time by Ford family members, foundation directors, staff, and others who attend every awards luncheon and all summer conferences and show scholars that they are personally and genuinely interested in their success
- The helpful contract relationship that exists with the Oregon State Scholarship Commission to do preliminary applicant screening, maintain records, provide daily administrative support, and assist with logistics for the conferences and other gatherings
- Assistance of 10 Oregonians—educators, community leaders, and business persons—who conduct hundreds of interviews throughout the state with the applicants who become finalists for both scholarship programs
- People who are presenters at the summer conferences, ranging from management trainers to a United States Senator, and from university professors to the Oregon Secretary of State
- Hundreds of high school and community college counselors and agency staff who tell likely candidates about the two programs and urge them to consider applying
- Financial aid staff at nearly every college and university in Oregon who work patiently with Ford Scholars and Opportunity Program people to calculate their level of need
- Those who informally hear about the programs, or have family members who participate, and then at the right moment suggest to likely candidates that they apply

> Nothing is more fundamental in building community than taking the time to develop honest and caring relationships with and for others.

Because of the vision of the two founders, the Ford Scholars and the Ford Opportunity Program exist and have the financial resources necessary. Because of the staff of the foundation and the Oregon State Scholarship Commission, the two programs are fully implemented and improving each year. And because of the participation of the many other partners, more and more of those who should be served by these programs are indeed learning about them.

Next September, 140 more students will attend Oregon colleges and universities because of these permanent programs, and the same will be true each year into the future. So in the next 25 years, 3,500 Oregonians will become Ford Scholars and Ford Opportunity Program participants. That will have significant impact in this region. And because of their relationships, they will make a significant impact on each other far into the future.

Two things that Kenneth Ford and Hallie Ford knew from the beginning undergird these programs. First, no investment has greater potential return for society than investments in human beings. Second, nothing is more fundamental in building community than taking the time to develop honest and caring relationships with and for others. One Ford Scholar "put the icing on the cake" when he said, "Because they have such a caring interest in me, I definitely will do more to help others in my life."

Five years of working with the Fords and with the people participating in the two programs have provided me with one of the most wonderful experiences of my life. I suppose this is so because I found myself in such complete harmony with their visions, then had the joy of seeing those visions become reality.

Charles U. Walker was President of Linfield College from 1975 to 1992. From 1993 to November 1998, he was Director of the Ford Scholars and the Ford Opportunity Program and remains involved as a Ford Family Foundation Trustee. ■

By helping students see how they fit into the community, we all stand to gain.

BY LINDA KRUGER

While I was in England recently, the British government called for "citizenship education" in secondary schools to increase the knowledge, skills, and values relevant to the practice of participatory democracy. In other words, to arm young people with the capacity to be socially responsible citizens. It made me wonder: How well do our educational programs prepare students for community participation in the United States?

In this country, much is made of the declining state of communities. All we have to do is turn on the news or pick up a newspaper to read about youth problems. A bigger tragedy, however, is hidden behind the headlines. Many children first learn about community in a chaotic setting where they are exposed to a horrendous example of how to get along with others.

A child who grows up in a dysfunctional or distressed family may arrive at school without having acquired a basic sense of community. The teacher must create a bridge across the child's actual home situation to a larger home, where the child can imagine belonging to the community-at-large. Within this bigger world, the child can discover what it means to create, to explore, and to participate as a citizen.

When the task of creating "socially responsible active citizens" takes into consideration the living conditions of many of today's youth, then it is imperative that the community join with schools in building a strong foundation on which these young people can grow beyond their personal circumstances. This is a monumental task, and requires us to expand the definition of community involvement in schools.

By strengthening the bond between school and community, we can provide youth with opportunities to better understand how they fit into both the local community and the greater biophysical environment. A practical, experiential education, such as the Discovery Team I had a chance to observe in action in the White Pass School District in rural Washington, offers a way to teach both individual and team lessons. Collaborative learning opportunities engender an understanding that personal welfare depends on group welfare. Through such experiences, students learn that, regardless of differences of opinion, people can and must find ways to work and live together. Personal attributes such as reliability, responsibility, perseverance, sociability, tolerance, and flexibility are the basis for public life. These values are learned through participation in actual events in specific places. Participation in learning about the local community can provide those real-life events that can enable students to become "native to a place."

In White Pass, teachers have seen this hands-on approach to learning work wonders for at-risk youth. A "location-specific curriculum" can be initiated in one class, in a group of coordinated classes, as an after school activity, or as a summer program. It can be built around local traditions, rooted in the uniqueness of the place, and include learning about the local and regional ecology, economy, and culture. Such a curriculum enables students to become knowledgeable inhabitants, especially when their involvement entails learning local history, stories, legends, rituals, and practices that define the community and what it means to be part of it. This kind of learning nurtures the democratic spirit, strengthening and sustaining our communities.

How can schools promote the community as classroom? The learning opportunities are boundless. Discussion of the interplay between people and their environment over time and space provides an opportunity to integrate the study of history, geography, landscape, literature, ecology, economics, land use and planning, and government. Community study provides an opportunity for several teachers to coordinate across the curriculum to create a more holistic approach to study that is grounded in real life and can have immediate practical application. It also provides an opportunity for local residents to share what they know about the community. Students can learn about social action through service learning by getting involved in current community issues or a community development activity as part of their classroom work.

A first step in getting such a program started is to organize a community study, similar to the one undertaken in the White Pass School District. This might entail a series of community forums where local community members are invited to come into the classroom, or to come to an evening open house to discuss some aspect of community history or culture. Community members may want to bring photographs or other memorabilia to help facilitate conversation with students. Media classes may want to do videotaped oral histories with elders who have considerable local knowledge. Government classes may want to study the

changes in local policy or governance over time and see how external events have affected local decisions. Art classes may want to look at how local artists portray the local area, what media they use, and what images their work conveys about the area.

Students might consider these questions: If I had moved away from this community 100 years ago and came back today, what would I notice that is different? What changes would I notice if I had left 50 years ago? What things have changed in the last 25 years? These are integrative questions that cross disciplinary boundaries. Answering these questions could entail oral histories with local residents or one-time residents who have moved away, photo analysis, archival research that might include looking through old phone books, school yearbooks, newspapers, and other materials that help tell the story of a community. Students could also identify an issue of concern or importance and conduct research to better understand underlying causes, implications, and potential solutions.

Community study, incorporating a "school-to-work" learning model, offers a way to engage at-risk students. Students who have not shown an interest in school or who have had problems with a traditional curriculum may suddenly become excited about doing a photo-journal project that documents important features of their community, or that depicts a current issue of interest or concern. They may want to take an indepth look at some particular topic of interest, such as historic flooding and community preparedness, by interviewing residents and government officials and doing an analysis of historical documents. Counselors in White Pass shared these observations about how the program affected students: "Dealing with the public did wonders for them. It showed them that they could do something. They learned people skills and gained significantly in self-confidence and assertiveness with people."

Using the community as a learning environment helps students integrate the skills and knowledge they are learning in the classroom. As one of the White Pass teachers commented, "It is truly the only way to provide applied learning of the concepts that are taught in the classroom." Maybe most important, however, are the lessons of self-confidence, life skills, and an appreciation and understanding of place. As students engage in learning about and being active in their community, they make personal observations: "I can look back and say, 'Look what I did!'" "I learned I can work with a lot of people to come up with a lot of information and put it into one report." "I learned that I could go up to people and interview them without being shy or embarrassed." "It gave me a new understanding and appreciation of the rich history that our community is built on. I never did comprehend before this summer what a huge difference the mills and tourism were."

Communities and schools may never have needed each other as much as they do now. Many schools are coping with reduced budgets for counselors and support services, tattered texts and substandard equipment, and elimination of funding for the arts. Yet at the same time, they are expected to work toward increased test and achievement scores. Community members can lay the groundwork for real improvement by helping to turn their community into a classroom. They can beat the bushes to find funding and sponsors, leaving teachers to focus on other aspects of teaching.

The students who find that their community supports them, listens to them, and promotes their ideas, thoughts, and creativity will have a better chance of becoming socially responsible and productive members of society. And the community will be all the better for it.

Linda Kruger is Research Social Scientist with the USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station in Seattle, Washington. Her research focus is community-forest relationships. Her doctoral dissertation included learning as a participant in the White Pass School District Discovery Team Community Self-Assessment project. ■

LETTERS

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

in the edition entitled "Taking Off: A Teacher's Guide to Technology" [Spring 1998], one of the major themes addressed the subject of teacher training, mentoring, learning, and applying computer technology in order to effectively bring it to the classroom. In the articles "Behind the Mystique," "The Promise of Technology," and "Conquering the Computer," as well as others, one theme recurs over and over, i.e. *teacher* training, *teacher* mentoring, *teacher* fears of learning this new "complex" technology—always what the *teachers* must do. I was struck by the almost total absence of what the teachers' "leaders" are or should be doing to assist the teachers in this great new endeavor.

If we believe that computer technology is a true "sea change" in the world of education, as I believe it is, then perhaps there ought to be more effort expended by the "leaders" at actually leading. By leaders, I mean the principals, administrators, and district superintendents. I suspect that just as there are teachers who are lagging behind in learning about technology or are indifferent or opposed to it, there is an equivalent percentage of leaders who are somewhat "below the horizon" on this subject.

It is my belief that the best way to lead is to do just that—be in front and lead by example. If every superintendent, every administrator, and every principal actively learned, understood, and used computer technology in their own daily professional lives, what an example it would be to the teachers. Each of these leaders could actually assist, as the occasion presented itself, in this all-important activity of training/mentoring teachers in the application of technology in the classroom. I am sure there are many dedicated leaders who do just this, but I suspect there are some—or many—who don't "lead." For a leader, this is not acceptable.

Richard Pearl
Retired Lockheed contract manager
Bainbridge Island, Washington

TO OUR READERS

The "Letters" column is your corner of *Northwest Education*. We invite readers to share opinions and ideas about articles that appear in these pages. We also welcome your suggestions for topics you would like to read about in future issues. Write to us at *Northwest Education*, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 101 S.W. Main Street, Suite 500, Portland, Oregon 97204. We look forward to hearing from you.

—The Editors

THE WORLD

Continued from Page 23

People have to be able to read and write and do arithmetic much more than they did then."

When Pauline Roberts, 83, was a young woman, she learned from her mother and other women in the village how to cut seal with the uluaq *(a curved blade that fits in the palm of the hand), how to make oil for heating and cooking, and to care for the meat. She also became skilled in crafts.*

"I learned how to make baskets, some small with lids and some large without lids, and grass mats," she explains. "I learned to make winter mittens and boots, handbags and slippers out of seal skin. I also learned how to make yo-yos. I learned how to use every part of the salmon."

Using her hands to demonstrate, she tells how she made salmon skinboots. She would carefully remove the skin from the salmon, wash it with soap and then hang it to dry. After it was completely dry, she would scrape the scales off and sew together several pieces of the strong parchment-like material to make tall, waterproof boots—valuable protection from the constant moisture of the delta.

"Our elders won't be here forever," says Samson Mann. "The Yup'ik tradition is important for kids to learn because it's part of our basic survival, our subsistence. At the same time, the world is coming to us. Kids need to keep up with both the traditional ways and the modern ways. Change is a good thing, too." ■

COMMUNITIES

Continued from Page 45

about programs, they may have greater impact on the effectiveness of other organizations."

"Good things happen, but it's hard to track who or what is responsible," says Martell. Some forces are too big to control directly. For example, in a strong economy more students drop out to go to work; in bad times they're more likely to stay in school, she points out. "Things like that we're never going to be able to tackle. But you have to have faith that what we do is good. And I do. I really believe in it." ■

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Fall issue
Schoolwide Reform: Changing Schools from the Ground Up

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identify places where good things are happening,
provide descriptions of effective techniques being used,
suggest useful resources, and submit letters to the editor.

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